

# SOCIAL REVOLUTION

6p

no. 3

formerly WORKERS POWER

## The Right To Work?

Unemployment and the fight back

Hundreds of thousands of people have now been thrown out of work and have suffered a huge drop in their standard of living as a result. Without actually abolishing capitalism altogether it is certain that things will get even worse in the coming months.

This doesn't mean, however, that we should fatalistically accept the situation without a fight back. Some small victories have already been won through militant action against the employers, as with the social workers' strikes in London, and these point the way forward.

In key industries; occupations and other militant tactics have tipped the balance in government decision making and forced them to step in and save jobs; as for instance in the Clyde shipbuilding industry.

Public Sector alliances initiated by shop stewards or rank-and-file action groups have begun to challenge the cuts in some areas (see *Fight Back*, paper of the East London Committee Against the Cuts), and these examples if followed right across the country could certainly have a real impact.

It is important that all workers should be alerted to the enormous threat of unemployment and the possibilities of averting that threat by united class action. In particular we must work towards unity between the employed and the unemployed, so that both can reinforce the other's struggles.

Some attempts are being made in this direction through the "left" press launching a "Right To Work" campaign, but there are serious dangers, from a socialist point of view, in adopting this slogan as the centrepiece of any campaign against unemployment.

### Capitalist morality

In the first place, the very idea that such a "right" could exist under capitalism is an absurdity. Unemployment great or small is a NORMAL part of the present economic set-up.

It will never disappear completely until the whole market/profit economy is destroyed. The avoidance of unemployment within capitalism depends largely on the organised strength of workers viz-a-viz the capitalist class and their agents.

Secondly and more importantly, the "Right To Work" slogan plays on an aspect of capitalist morality for its support, which socialists should be attacking head on. Namely the idea that we can only be usefully involved in



society if we are being paid a wage and exploited by some employer.

There's nothing socially useful about working in an armaments factory, or in an advertising agency — persuading people to buy Heinz rather than Batchelors soup. Whilst banking and Insurance are essential to capitalism, they would serve no useful purpose in a society where production was planned for use.

We shouldn't be trying to get support for this campaign by exploiting the false feelings of social inadequacy which capitalism fosters in the unemployed.

Furthermore, unity between employed and unemployed should be based on equality, not simply on the integration of the unemployed into a movement directed by organised labour. This means encouraging the self-organisation of the unemployed through claimants 'unions' and other similar bodies.

### Self organising

It also means encouraging the organisation of "mutual aid" projects which are more positive in direction and far more personally rewarding than the usual demonstrations

cont. p.2



# where we're at

Throughout the world a small minority of bosses — private capitalists or State bureaucrats — own and control the means of life: the factories, laboratories, communications and all the other resources we depend on. They leave the rest of us with no choice but that of working for them — in boring, usually socially useless or harmful, and often dangerous jobs outside the home, and bringing up kids for the same kind of life inside the home. They let us produce goods and services only when they can make a profit by selling them, in complete disregard of human needs, so that mountains of food are destroyed while millions starve who can't afford to buy it, so that people rot in slums while building workers are laid off. And when the trade wars between the bosses of different countries hot up into the real thing, it's the rest of us, the working people, who have to make the weapons and are sent off to kill one another.

But plenty of us refuse to put up with it all without a fight. In our workplaces we organise to defend living standards and to gain some control over conditions of work. In the community we form tenants' associations, resist motorways and try to stop pollution. School and college students challenge the way they are indoctrinated. Women, gays, black people fight the discrimination they suffer. Socialists try to spread awareness of the need for a complete change to a free classless society.

These, and others, are all valid ways for working people to express their needs as human beings and resist their conditions of life. Members of the SOCIAL REVOLUTION group are all involved in one or more of these movements. We aim to encourage people to organise democratically without leaders, and to exchange experiences and understandings so that all the different struggles can merge, with one another and across national frontiers, into a united and conscious movement for world social revolution.

The liberation of the working class can only be the work of the majority of working people themselves. The manipulation of self-appointed leaders can only hold back this work. We expect that the main form of organisation for carrying out revolutionary

*cont. from p. 1*

and token occupations of employment offices, important as these are for publicity purposes.

Whilst it *isn't possible* to build the "alternative society" within the framework of capitalism so as to gradually replace it altogether, it *is possible*, on a limited scale, to build alternative centres, or bases for attacking capitalism.

For instance, a "free school" project run by unemployed teachers and others (along the lines of the 'White Lion Street' school in London, or the 'Scotland Road' school in Liverpool) cannot replace the state system, but is still useful in itself, and offers a marvelous opportunity for experimentation, which can by example be an inspiration to all radical students and teachers.

The same principle applies to self-organised play-groups, womens centres, community presses and so forth. Similarly, projects in communal living are not only of value to the people actually involved; they provide living experiences of immense value to the whole revolutionary movement.

Where these projects in the same locality become allied to each other, they can provide a useful network of information and practical support for all those struggling against capitalism, by providing — printing facilities, meeting places (with reliable creches), and emotional support.

The great potential here is only hinted at in current schemes, such as those of the Maida Hill Squatters and Tenants Association, which runs a restaurant, playgroup and other services through a system of 'labour-time vouchers'.

The unemployed could provide a real impetus to the squatting movement which has provided the material basis for so many of the projects mentioned so far.

change will be some kind of WORKERS COUNCILS — that is, councils of delegates based on workplaces and neighbourhoods, elected by and under the direct democratic control of working people. These councils will co-operate to produce and distribute the goods and services needed by the community, which will be made freely available as the waste of capitalism is done away with. Work will be the voluntary and varied activity of people controlling their own creativity for agreed human purposes. The united world, without money, Government or war, will belong for the first time to the people of the world.

This paper is produced by the SOCIAL REVOLUTION group. The paper aims to say why the everyday existence and struggles of workers in this society, and the trend of current events, show the need for and tendency towards a free socialist society, created by the action of the vast majority, the working class.

"SOCIAL REVOLUTION" is produced because we believe that if groups of workers are to make any meaningful contrib contribution to the struggle for socialism, then they need to communicate their ideas.

"SOCIAL REVOLUTION" is produced by different local groups taking it in turn to edit and layout each issue. We do this in order to attempt to break down the divisions of labour imposed by modern society.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION group will not be telling anyone to "follow us", or issuing calls to "build the revolutionary party" as if it were some universal panacea to the problems facing our class. But revolutionary groups do have a role to play in the struggle for socialism. These groups should attempt to clarify issues, to attempt to show the links between seemingly isolated and unconnected activities and struggles — to show that these are linked in the overall fight to overthrow this rotting corpse of a social system, capitalism, and replace it by a democratic society with people producing for use not profit. For the abolition of working for wages and salaries, and its replacement by communal work with free access to the needs of life. For the abolition of states, nations, and wars, for the establishment of a world community where all are free to develop their capabilities to the full. We call upon all those in agreement with our views to join us.

## Halting demoralisation

There is no reason why this kind of activity (largely ignored by the left) should be competitive with the struggle of organised workers in industry or council tenants etc. It is both valid in itself and complimentary to the wider struggle against the bastions of capitalism.

We won't prevent the dangerous demoralisation of our unemployed brothers and sisters simply by marching them up and down in largely futile demonstrations. This way they will soon fall prey to government and charity organised work schemes and propaganda.

**Our unregulated hours away from the supervision of the boss need to be more positively used to further the struggle against capitalism.**

Mike Ballard

SOCIAL REVOLUTION — Some copies of No's 1 and 2 are still available. 12p including postage.

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM is our discussion journal, open to all revolutionaries. No. 9 contains our "Draft Manifesto". Copies of No's 7 and 8 are also available. 18p including postage.

MARX'S EARLY WRITINGS — is a short duplicated pamphlet, a good introduction to Marx's early work. 10p including postage.

LIBERTARIAN WOMENS NETWORK — Newsletter now available for 50p sub from Alison Malet, 1 Lynwood Place, Dundee, Scotland.

PHILADELPHIA SOLIDARITY — libertarian socialist publication from America, available from London SR group, 18p including postage.



# A BITTER BREW IN DENMARK :

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS A SYNOPSIS OF A SERIES OF ARTICLES THAT APPEARED IN THE DANISH MAGAZINE ARBEJDSPLADSEN

## Background to the struggle

IN 1970 after many years of close co-operation, including profit-sharing, Tuborg and Carlsberg merged to form the Carlsberg/Tuborg Corporation (C/T), the Danish multinational brewing company.

In the following five years they have intensified expansion, building brewers in Malawi, Brazil, Turkey, Cyprus, Malaysia and lately in England, as well as swallowing up several small breweries in Denmark itself.

The brewery workers in Copenhagen have traditionally been strong, fighting for better wages and conditions. Having now a wide spread of production plants the corporation can transfer bottling if there's a dispute in one of the better organised plants.

## Chronology of Struggle

In 1974 C/T began an attack on the Copenhagen brewery workers. This amounted to temporary dismissals, political sackings, blacklisting and a general stiffening of discipline at the workplace.

Between July and September (1974) approximately 800 workers were dismissed for periods of up to 2 months and re-employed when the management considered them necessary to maintain profit levels.

Discipline was stiffened by keeping a blacklist on absence days; 2 days off in a month merited a warning, 3 warnings meant the sack.

Feelings of insecurity amongst the workers were further fostered by the management by a reduction of manning levels on bottling machines; rationalising away jobs; the firing of many local committee members; the persecution of activist workers; and even a threat to close the Tuborg plant for 3 months if the workers took industrial action against the worsening conditions.

The trade unions answer to the managements' onslaught was to plead for law and order on the part of their members. They told them to "remember that they are the small ones" and instead of organising for the defence of their members they called instead for a **SOCIAL CONTRACT**. Their answer was simply the old, old story . . . "there is a crisis, we must wait for better times

before we press for improvements".

In October-November (1974) a new wave of dismissals began. The workers responded to this by laying claim at local general meetings to:-

- 1 a written guarantee against further dismissals; and
- 2 the re-employment of all those already dismissed.

The unions strongly resisted this, but under pressure they finally agreed to hold a referendum of the membership. However, against the appropriate rules, unemployed members were to be excluded from the vote with the result to be decided on a qualified majority.

Matters were further complicated by the fact that men and women workers are represented by different unions and whereas the men at their union general meeting rejected the unions attempt to rig the referendum, the women's meeting only agreed to demand a common majority. It is clear that until the nonsensical split between the two unions is ended united action is made much more difficult.

Despite a women's majority of 100 and a 1,000 majority amongst the men, the unions have suspended the claim as the management have hinted that re-employment of the dismissed workers may be in breach of the Danish labour laws.

In February 1975 the unions began to negotiate the new agreement with C/T. During these negotiations the management made a series of claims of their own. They wanted to reduce the piece rate paid to workers, freedom to hire and fire as they pleased regardless of seniority and sizeable redundancies in the region of 400-500 workers.

Despite the fact that all 3 sections of women workers refused to accept these redundancies at their meetings, their union board decided they would indeed accept some reduction in manning (*sic*, typist) levels, in order to bargain.

On the 24th February (1975) it was announced that the women's union had accepted in one section alone a reduction of 44-52 women workers out of a total of 100. There is a strong feeling amongst many of the women workers that they have been sold out by their union.

## Meanwhile . . .

Meanwhile the mens union refused categorically to accept any reduction of the present manning levels. The management answered that without redundancies they would not meet their demands for a

wage increase.

The resulting deadlock was taken to arbitration. On the 11th July the men struck demanding that the arbitration decision be published. It was . . . and came out in favour of the management.

The men struck again, for the week and it was then decided to hold one 24 hour stoppage each week. However, the management overcame the effectiveness of this tactic by sending out more beer on the 4 working days.

In response to this, the fork-lift drivers began to control the number of crates leaving the factory. The management then attempted to create disunity by attacking the delivery drivers. These drivers were not directly involved in the negotiations but during the 24 hour strikes they were sent home without pay. They were also paid on a piece rate basis which meant that their wages were adversely affected by the fork-lift drivers action.

However on the 23rd July at a meeting at the Carlsberg plant, the delivery drivers decided to respect the action of their comrades.

The management then immediately threatened to suspend without pay all delivery drivers who did not carry a full load.

The drivers responded in turn by blockading all the brewery gates with their lorries and halting production in the bottling plant. After 4 hours the management capitulated, paying the drivers for the day and accepting the fork-lift drivers limit.

This display of unity amongst different sections of workers has been mirrored by the actions of other brewery workers in various parts of Denmark who have sent money, as well as refused to work overtime during the dispute.

On Monday 4th August 1975 the workers in number 4 belt-gang on G.I. tap Carlsberg, refused to do the work of a redundant comrade. This action brought the bottling belt to a standstill. The workers were then sent home without pay.

The following shift also refused to do the work of the redundant worker and they too were sent home without pay. The other belt-gangs then downed tools in sympathy with the number 4 gang.

The management rather than re-employ the redundant worker instead changed operations to manual packing thus bypassing, but not solving the problem.

## Objects of the struggle

The men's demand is to get the same wage increases as the women workers, but without redundancies. It is important that this stands fast no matter what the



management offers, for it is a question of more than current rationalisations.

It is a question of the destruction of the idea that a management can by offering higher wages to the remaining workers unleash wholesale redundancies.

It is also important that trade unions must not be allowed to play the role of "Judas goat", gaining increased wages for some of its members at the expense of their comrades livelihoods. It is a question of resisting all attacks, from whatever source, on the unity of all workers.

The workers of C/T cannot limit their demands to the present level. The development of their struggle has shown that the demands must be extended; They must:-

- extend the fight to the principle that no worker is laid off without pay when another group takes action,
- fight for the re-instatement of the redundant workers,
- fight against wage differentials between various groups and demand equal wages for all.

#### Postscript

Since the article appeared in Denmark there have been further developments. It has been revealed that the trade union bosses have accepted that 128 men will be made redundant in a years time.

It is now also known that the Danish version of the now defunct British National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) has made a verdict against the Carlsberg workers and their union, fining the union Kr 150,000 (the largest sum any Danish union has been fined) and the workers Kr 70 per strike day.

The shop floor reaction to this double onslaught was for 250 workers to immediately down tools in the brewing section.

The struggle continues.

M.R.K. Turner

#### REAL ALE PEOPLE!

Some members of Social Revolution and the Anarchist Workers Association in south London got together and produced a leaflet which was handed out at the four day CAMRA beer festival held in Covent Garden from September 9th to 13th. Copies of this leaflet can be had from London SR. Enclose a sae.



# is there LIFE on earth?

## HIGH HOPES

I PASSED my GCE's and decided I'd like to be a newspaper reporter. The little careers guidance I received was devoted to explaining that getting such a job was impossible, that advice and help (?) was so routine that it made no impression.

I worked in the local plastics factory while looking for a job as trainee reporter. Forty hours a week for just over £9. Still, in the months I was there I saved enough to buy myself a suit so that I didn't have to go to my new job in school uniform.

The work in the plastics factory was clean, but there was a smell from the hot plastic which got into hair, clothes and onto the skin so that even at home we were never free of it.

Worse than the smell was the boredom, taking the moulded items from the machine, breaking off the spigot left by the mould and boxing them.

\* On each side towered a large machine, so that I couldn't see anyone except the woman who came to inspect the work, and she was "one of them" on the management side.

The noise was so loud that people always had to shout to make themselves heard. One day my machine developed a fault and so I had a mechanic to chat (shout) to for half an hour while he repaired it — I learned from him what causes it (and how to cause the same fault to happen again).

After that my machine had a regular spate of faults.

## IN PRINT

Eventually I got a job with a newspaper in the Fens, left home and went into the digs found by my employers. They cost £3-10-0 a week, but as a trainee my wages were £5. National Insurance stamp accounted for 16/8 — the other 13/4 covered soap, toothpaste, and my train fare home occasionally.

My digs was a small terraced house, and my landlady was well over 70, her daughter must have been 55-60.

There was no running water upstairs, and only cold downstairs. The lavatory was in the back yard. The room was simply furnished, bed, dressing table, chair, wardrobe, washstand and basin. The

The landlady's daughter brought me hot water in a bucket, so that I could wash and shave in the morning.

Fen winds are cold, as I soon found out, because my window wouldn't shut properly.

The newspaper was widely read in the

area, and very profitable. Most of the staff were, like myself, trainees.

The editor, news-editor, sub-editor, sports editor and the chief reporter were the only qualified, "fully trained" staff. The newspaper was actually written by seven trainees, receiving less than £11 a week.



Studying for exams took place in the evening, provided that we weren't working (unpaid) overtime, and we paid our own course fees.

After a few weeks I had a blazing row with my landladies, when I discovered they'd been reading my letters, so I changed lodgings, moving into a classier area where I got bed and breakfast for £4-4-0 a week. That didn't leave me much out of £5 less 16/8!

Luckily I'd saved a little from the plastics factory, so I could afford to have beans on toast or sausage fritter and ships in the dockyard chipshop.

## HARD TIMES

Things could have been better. If news stories we wrote appeared in the national press, or the local stop press column of the evening daily papers, we should have received commission.

The *Daily Mirror* did an almost word for word reprint of a story of mine (only a short one) and I'm still waiting.

National daily papers just buy copies of all the local papers, and if something catches their eye and they think they can get away with it, they will.

The news-editor was correspondent for the evening papers, and this meant that only he could sell them stories — which he did, getting about 18/- to 20/- each for them, and he'd pass on 2/- or 2/6 to the person who wrote it.

Lack of money forced me to develop a strict routine, especially as winter had arrived and I couldn't afford money for the meter in my room, so I always volunteered for the evening jobs — at least they were in the warm, and sometimes there was a free meal.

Some nights I was last to leave the warm office, walking home quickly to get my circulation going.

Once back in my room, I'd read until cold again, then go out for another walk, and, if I could afford it, a bag of chips.

Sometimes (by good fortune) I might have a shilling. Should I put it in the meter, and have a warm room for an hour, or go down to the local pub, buy half a



cont. from p.4

cider and sit in a warm smoke-filled room over an empty glass all evening?

Not having any money is strange in the things you are forced to do. When sitting over my empty cider glass I would reject all friendly gestures. "They might buy me a drink, and I can't afford to buy them one back," I thought. Once I had bought someone a drink and had gone without my evening bag of chips the next day.

Back in my digs I'd lay fully clothed in bed attempting to read before my fingers got too cold to turn the pages.

It was a sordid but eventful period of my life: going round the undertakers and to the old people's home every day to see who was dead so we could put it in the paper.



## LIVING ON LOVE

Money ran out and I got bronchitis from the lack of food and warmth, so I gave up that "good" job and went in search of another.

For a year I worked as a clerk in a factory office, before going to work for a large firm of insurance brokers in London.

Men had to wear suits, ties and regulation length hair. We all had to sign in a book giving time of arrival, with a black pen which was provided. At 9.30 am promptly a man was deputised to change that black pen for a red one, so that anyone who arrived late signed the book in red.

Permission had to be given before anything could be done — even taking my jacket off had to be approved by my departmental head.

There was, apart from the tea break, a separate period of twenty minutes set aside each morning and each afternoon for going to the lavatory. If you went once, you had to use your whole 20 minutes or forfeit it.

I left after two months, before I got diahorrea.

More work in a factory office followed, of a very routine nature, 18 months was as much as I could bear.

Then I met Zosia, an au pair (£2 a week and all found) for a company director. We fell in love.

Two pounds a week, even when all found, doesn't give people the right to interfere in someone else's private life, so when the people complained that I shouldn't go to Zosia's room with her, she left and went to London to work for a Jewish family (£4 a week and all found) who were far more sensible.

For six months I worked in a factory as an assistant machine operator. My job was to scoop out pieces of waste metal from under the machine where it was left by the cutting tool.

Again — isolated by large machines and noise, working to someone else's speed, and covered all over with machine oil.

Still, the extra money (I got £25 before deductions for working a 12 hour day, five days a week) paid my train fare to London at weekends.

Promised that after I'd been there for six weeks I'd have a rise in my basic pay, I tackled the forman. Yes, I could have a rise in basic, but if I insisted I'd be put on a machine where the piece rate was lower.

I stayed where I was.

## DOWN AND OUT

Some weeks there was no overtime, and then I was nearly broke. On these occasions I'd sleep on benches in Hyde Park or St. James's Park (never a good place, as the police came round) or walk around all night, when I went to see Zosia at weekends.

It was during this period that my liberal conscience began to harden, although it didn't develop into a revolutionary perspective for some time.

Police harassment by night and day would have been unbelievable in the small market town where I live.

People sleeping in shop doorways, not just occasionally like I did, but every night. One very cold night I went to Liverpool Street Station to keep warm, and there were several regulars there, huddled in corners, recognisable in their shapeless grey overcoats. One man lay asleep in the corner, using his boots as a pillow, two policemen came in, one kicked and woke him away — why I didn't know.

Washing and shaving in an underground washroom, next to someone who is unwrapping a layer of newspaper which has been under their vest all night to help keep out the cold, or catching a fleeting glimpse of someone furtively injecting themselves in a public lavatory, gave me a different view of life.

Why do we all tolerate a society which wastes and destroys human life and dignity?

A succession of jobs in factories, offices, as a bank clerk — with over a quarter of a million pounds a day passing through my hands.

Watching people, a helpless observer, as they came to ask for £5 or £10 overdrafts to "see them through to the end of

the month", and growing more bitter as they were turned down — "No security".

Others borrowed thousands, and already had money locked away in stocks, shares and property.

I could find no human face to Peter Walker's brand of "responsible capitalism". Only a mask which hid reality.

Lately I've been working in a library.

Over 40 hours a week and three hours a day travelling — I might change, but I don't relish the prospect of being one of Dennis Healey's 1½million.

## THE FRUITS OF LABOUR?

Ten years since I left school, during which time I've never been out of work except for a short period when I went to the tech in the next town — even then I worked evenings, weekends and holidays as my "grant" was only £200 a year.

What do I have to show for it?

I live in a rented house, sleep in a rented bed, watch a rented TV, and wrote this on a rented table.

Our lives are stunted by a system which forces people to work, isolates them from their workmates, places them in lousy conditions, both at home and at work.

Such is the nature of this society, whether at work in factory or office, as student, or as housewife, we are all as much victims of this society as are the people who sleep in shop doorways, and it is only by working together, making positive attempts to overcome the divisions implied by such terms as "factory hand", "office clerk", "student" or "housewife" that we will create the anarchist-communist society that will allow us to develop fully as people.

Martyn Everett

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# WORLD WIDE PORTUGAL



DESPITE THE official opposition of all major parties in Portugal, from the Christian Democrats (tories) to the so-called Socialist and Communist Parties, as well as the Armed Forces Movement that overthrew the old Caetano regime, workers have been occupying factories, offices, shops and farms throughout the country, and organising their administration through delegate committees and general assemblies.

There has also been the beginnings of co-ordination industrially and geographically with joint committees and assemblies of workers, soldiers, students and residents in many towns; and with organisations such as the *Interimpresa*, a joint industrial council for the whole area around Lisbon.

These organisations involving workers who supported the different parties in the elections and those who supported no parties, have by-passed the largely Communist Party controlled trade unions and the TU federation — the *Intersindical*.

The first issue of the *Interimpresa* information bulletin announced: *"The development of struggles after April 25th verified the separation of the trade unions and the parties claiming to represent the working class from the class and their sabotage of this struggle. The necessity for exchanges and contacts between workers in struggle is obvious."*

## The Army and the State

There is still however little recognition of the need to take complete control of all the resources of production and distribution through workers councils and to destroy the capitalist state machine, which still maintains an uneasy co-existence alongside the councils.

The Government cannot rely on the bulk of the armed forces to attack the councils' activities — many units have openly sided with workers in struggle and handed over arms to them. Some soldiers are beginning to realise the need to disband the army altogether as a *separate force* from the rest of the working class.

Still, there are some units loyal to their reactionary officers. The Government is rapidly reorganising them and recruiting new soldiers from amongst dissatisfied refugees from Angola. Its commando unit was confident enough to attack and blow up the radical *Radio Renascença* and is no doubt

preparing new attacks on other radical news media.

## Only a beginning

The democratic re-organisation of production and distribution and the equalisation of wages is proceeding rapidly in some areas, but the limited resources available and the deadweight of decades of authoritarian conditioning are still holding workers back from a full attack on the whole market economy, (there is still much prejudice against equal pay for women).

Most workers both inside and outside Portugal still see the 'revolution' as a largely national affair, something which can spread only *after* Portugal is won over. But unless the revolution is spread immediately, beyond the frontiers of Portugal into the heartlands of Europe, Portugal will be isolated and crushed by external political and economic forces.

The workers of the Portuguese airlines (TAP) have perhaps gone furthest in their understanding of the present situation:

*"The TAP workers are not going to let themselves be fooled by anyone, and we are quite aware that capitalism still continues and that our struggle cannot be limited to the TAP or even to our own country. We also know that a real revolution is only possible where society is totally controlled by the workers themselves, and which the power of the state can never be used*

*against us. That is why we are going to continue to organise in our workplaces and to struggle for a society with neither exploiters nor exploited. A communist society!"*

The lessons of Portugal are important to us all.

Mike Ballard

# ANGOLA

## BACKGROUND

In economic terms Angola and its enclave of Cabinda contain a great deal of potential wealth, both mineral and agricultural. Vast oilfields lie off the Cabindan coast and a "second Kuwait" has been discovered off the northern province of Santo Antonio do Zaire.

There is the Cassinga iron mining complex in southern Angola and there are many other minerals as yet unexploited. Angola exports sisal and is the 2nd most important coffee grower in Africa.

Strategically Angola is also important. The Cunene Dam, essential to electric and water supplies in S.W. Africa has already been seized by the South African state.

The Benguela railway carries 40% of Zaire's major export — copper — to the sea and most of Zambia's copper exports. Angola straddles an important sea route for all the world's major powers.

It is in line with these interests that different countries give their support for the different nationalist movements in Angola.

Zaire has consistently supported secessionist movements in Cabinda. South Africa is giving military aid to UNITA in southern Angola. The Russians, eager for port facilities for their navy, have given military and diplomatic aid to the leftist MPLA who presently control Luanda and its hinterland. Cuban military advisors are also present.

In opposition to them the USA and China sit in an unhappy alliance with the forces of the FNLA in the north and UNITA in the south of the country.

The British and Belgian interests already established in Angola have to rely on South Africa and more importantly the



Soldiers and workers in Lisbon on 17 July:



# THE SAME CLASS STRUGGLE

USA to protect them.

The following article describes developments in the Inter-Imperialist struggle in Angola up to 'Independence'.

## THE COMPETITORS

Since mid July the armed clashes between the Popula Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) has become an all out civil war.

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) though initially neutral now sides totally with FNLA probably because it fears the growing power of MPLA.

## IS MPLA RADICAL

MPLA; which is now backed by the USSR; has gained a strong leftist image. The demonstration in solidarity with the Portuguese workers in London supported them.

When one of their members spoke at the demonstration he was at great pains to deny that MPLA was Marxist or Communist merely nationalist. Their enemies were not capitalism, but imperialism, tribalism and as if to prove the low level of debate in Angola, cannibalism.

This is no less than Neto (their leader) has said himself:

*"I dislike these classifications. I am not a communist. I am not a socialist. I am first of all a patriot."*

The democracy of MPLA is little more than talk. The beginning of 1974 found MPLA divided with Chipenda leading the main opposition to Neto. Neto first appeared to placate his opponents, agreeing to a portion of the seats on MPLA's ruling committee going to the opposition groups for the next year.

This never took effect. Before the new year Chipenda was expelled amidst dubious accusations. MPLA supporters point out that Chipenda has now joined the FNLA as proof of his treachery.

The truth is that Chipenda first attempted to set up his 'Eastern Revolt' group independently. In February this year MPLA attacked the Eastern Front offices in Luanda killing several members.

This was justified on the grounds that according to the agreement between Portugal and the 3 major liberation movements, which was then operating, the Angolan people could only be represented by those 3 movements, which didn't include Chipenda's group.

Within a few days FNLA, UNITA and MPLA together occupied Eastern Revolt offices. It is not surprising that Chipenda

took the first opportunity to join FNLA before his group was totally crushed.

## STRIKE WAVE

The response of the working class to the fall of Caetano in Portugal was a strike wave which swept Angola, particularly Luanda and Lubito. The shanty towns around Luanda are strongly MPLA, but the MPLA were incapable of dampening their supporters actions.

The leadership of the MPLA could merely look on while those who claimed to be their followers not only agitated for strikes, but also conducted small scale insurrections.

The transitional government, which included FNLA, MPLA and UNITA with the portuguese tried to keep control with an anti-strike law. The Lei Mobilacau gave the government the right to put workers in key industries under martial law.

Opposition was organised by the *Comissões Populares* who called a demonstration which thousands attended. The MPLA representative on the presidential council (set up as part of the transitional government) spoke vigorously for the law, but it was to prove totally inoperable.



## GOVERNMENT TRIES TO DISARM WORKERS

Many of those living in the shanty towns have arms. They first organised self-defence groups against whites, who fearing black rule, had attacked the townships round Luanda. In addition during the first clashes between the liberation movements, arms were distributed indiscriminately.

The government attempted to disarm these civilians. Though these were mainly their supporters, the MPLA was as strongly in favour of this as the rest of the government.

They had little success, as Lucio Lara (a member of MPLA's central committee) complained *"though under MPLA banner MPLA does not control them"*.

## GOVERNMENT DIVIDED: WORKERS UNITED

The most militant section of the workers are the dockers. On the 28th May they struck, in opposition to their trade union leaders, demanding the abolition of differentials. They went back 2 weeks later completely victorious. Increases were from 33% to 52% back dated to the first of February.

The *Johannesburg Star* blaming the militancy of the workers for Angolan economic troubles made a pointed remark about why the transitional government was so ineffective:

*"unlike Mozambique [now ruled by the 'marxist' FRELIMO] no one group is sufficiently in control to be able to tell the workers to work"*.

The MPLA is constantly in fact telling the workers to work! but it has so far not tried anything much more convincing than words.

## CIVIL WAR

Initially FNLA, with the backing of the CIA, was the strongest group. MPLA had no major backers and had been ostracised by the USSR. This changed as soon as MPLA looked as though it might take power. Russia poured in arms and this tipped the balance in their favour in Luanda.

But the defeat of the FNLA and UNITA was only temporary and they are now returning from their strongholds with much more force.

## MPLA and the WORKERS

In MPLA territory the 'Popular Commissions' have gained in power and the MPLA has not risked trying to disarm civilians.

The 'militia' is reported by MPLA sources to be about 50,000 strong in Luanda alone, compared with a total of 15,000 MPLA regulars in April last year.

Neither has MPLA felt strong enough to discipline workers. Its tactics have been to argue that at this stage, to strike is against the workers interests. If UNITA and FNLA are defeated, they hint that the workers will then have their opportunity.

The truth is exactly the reverse. It is because FNLA and UNITA are undefeated that the MPLA is unable to defeat the workers.

Many workers who still support MPLA think their anti-working class policies previously were a result of compromise with the other two liberation groups, but MPLA's links with the majority of workers are quite weak. Hopefully therefore,

cont. p.8



they will not follow the advice of UNTA (the MPLA backed trade union confederation) that the 'battle for production' must come before their interests.

The radical peasantry are more closely tied to the liberation movements because when they have fought against their oppression they have become part of 'liberated areas'. This may now change as it is no longer a clear cut fight against the Portuguese.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Whichever of the liberation movements wins out, Angola can only hope to maintain a purely nominal independence in hock to one or other of the Super Powers.

The workers of Luanda and other industrial and commercial centres must now prepare to defend themselves against the inevitable crack down by any new government, seeking to stabilise the strife torn economy.

For the future, workers must organise independently of all nationalist groups and link up with workers throughout Africa and the Imperialist nations.

DAVID BARNSDALE

**WORTH READING:** *Inter-imperialist struggle in Africa* World Revolution pamphlet No 3. 30p including p&p from "Rising Free" 197 Kings Cross Road, London WC1.

cont. from p.11

Although some of the book only has relevance to the Italian situation, the main arguments are valid for other countries, to a slightly lesser or greater degree.

Because of the limited subject tackled, the book does not give a clear idea of how the system of sex roles works, its value to our employers and how to fight against it. For this we have to look into the oppressive roles for which the children are being prepared by their dolls and toy tanks — soldiers, housewives and so on.

The author advocates introducing men as nursery teachers as a crucial way of breaking down the sex stereotyping of children. She does not make it clear that this is only likely to be effective to the extent that the teachers have freed themselves of the stereotypes. After all, educators who support sex roles also advocate more men teachers — to provide 'masculine' models for the boys to identify with.

The problem faced by adults who are consciously working on bringing up children in a new way are discussed in an interesting pamphlet by Phyllis Greenleaf — **Liberating Young Children from Sex Roles — Experiences in Day Care Centers, Play Groups and Free Schools**, published in 1972 by *New England Free Press*, 60 Union Square, Somerville, Mass. 02143, USA.

STEFAN

# BRAIN POLICE

## THE POLITICS OF PSYCHIATRY

Britain has on her statute books one of the most repressive pieces of legislation in the world. It allows for indefinite detention without trial, seizure of all the detainee's property and the legalisation of torture on the detainee. The detainee has no right of legal representation, no right of appeal except to an allegedly "independent" administrative tribunal at long intervals. The detainee has no access to the courts for redress; the Act prohibits the prosecution of anyone enforcing the legislation (eg. for assault) without the Home Secretary's permission. In fact the courts do not administer the legislation at all — all that is required to detain a person indefinitely is the opinion of two state-appointed persons.

The Act was passed quietly in 1959. It has — and is — been used upon hundreds of thousands of people yet there are no outcries in the press about its routine use, no public protests, yet its use is perfectly open for all to see. When it was passed in 1959 it was called "One of the most enlightened pieces of legislation of the age". Why?

Because it does not purport to be used against those who deserve human rights of freedom from incarceration and torture. It is only to be used on the less than human, the mentally "ill". The rest of us need feel no qualms. If they are compulsorily detained for years in a locked hospital ward, it is all for their "own good". If they are tortured with E.C.T. (electrically induced epileptic convulsions) they are being medically "treated"; its all for their "own good".

The above is taken from a leaflet published by the Hull Mental Patients Union. Few people are aware of the inherently class biased nature of institutional psychiatry. For some time psychiatric epidemiologists have been puzzled by the seemingly greater incidence of schizophrenia amongst the lower social groups. This puzzles them because schizophrenia is supposed to be a mental "disease" or "illness", and like physical disease to strike its victim without regard to his social status or lack of it. The problem raises the question as to whether the "medical model" is applicable to mental "illness" at all, and if it is not, whether psychiatry is in effect oppressive politics masquerading as medicine.

Incidence of schizophrenia here means incidence of *diagnosed* schizophrenia. Hence the problem may be stated another way; why do psychiatrists diagnose schizophrenia more commonly in the lower social groups?

The criteria which psychiatrists use in the diagnosis of severe mental "illness" at first sight looks impressively medical in character. Lists of "syndromes", "symptoms" and "prognosis" interspersed with currently fashionable psychiatric

nology fill the psychiatric textbooks. But these "symptoms" do not exist in isolation in the "patient"; the only way they can be elicited is when the "patient" takes part in some sort of social interaction (often only with a psychiatrist). Szasz has made the point that "surely one illness a corpse cannot have is mental illness"; it experiences no social relations, (T. Szasz. *The Second Sin*).

These "symptoms" are not medical entities but rather are indices of social disruption; the "patient" is treated not for the trouble he is to himself but for the trouble he is to others. Bearing this in mind, the situation clarifies; the lower social groups, lacking power and authority to effectively manipulate their social environment and thus ease an acute situational strain are far more likely than the 'middle' and 'upper' classes to be labelled "socially disruptive". The rates of mental "illness" amongst the various social classes are a reflection of the distribution of power, authority and privilege amongst those classes.

Psychiatry at the moment in this country is thus covertly politically repressive; this is not to say that it will not develop an overtly political purpose (as in the Soviet Union) if the class war heats up. Psychiatrists themselves are middle and upper class, and there is no reason to believe that they will not follow what appears to them to be their class interest if power and authority is seriously challenged by an emerging revolutionary dissident force in society. The legalistic face of psychiatry, the Mental Health Act of 1959, is a formidable weapon in the armoury of reaction and there is no doubt it would be used as part of the generalised repression of the revolution.

Anyone interested in the Mental Patients Union contact Mike Smith via Hull S.R. group address.



Due to increased costs the next issue of SR will be priced at 8p.



# tenants harassed

"GLC owed £2.5 million in back rent",  
 "Put owers out after 4 weeks",  
 "Crackdown on Artful Dodgers",

These are the kind of headlines that have been appearing over the last few months in our local paper the *Chiswick and Brentford Gazette*. They herald the start of a new "get tough" policy by the local council - Hounslow - and the Greater London Council on council tenants.

## COUNCIL BULLY BOYS

What does all this mean to the tenants on the estates. In our case we fell in arrears of rent. A pleasant enough man (Mr W) from the arrears department of the London Borough of Hounslow came round to see us when the arrears total reached about £30. He was very sympathetic and suggested that we make an arrangement to pay off the £30 by a weekly payment of £1. Also, why didn't we apply for a rent rebate as our income was so low? Mr W left the forms with us to fill in, we assumed everything was okay and we wouldn't get hassled anymore.

Two days later we received a threatening letter from the council - apparently we owed £60! If this wasn't paid within one week we would receive notice to quit. We phoned Mr W and explained what had happened. He explained it as a balls up in the bureaucracy. But everything would be okay. On the 20th September we received notice to quit.

## HARASSING TACTICS

We knew from friends who'd received similar treatment that these eviction notices were only semi-serious. The council use them as a deliberate tactic to harass their tenants into paying up arrears. We were lucky in two ways. Firstly we knew why the council use these tactics, and secondly that being a student I could expect to receive a grant cheque for £150 at the beginning of October - so we could pay off the arrears. As I say, we were lucky, but people have killed themselves over smaller issues - it might be valid to ask, what would have happened if a single OAP or mother had received such threats?

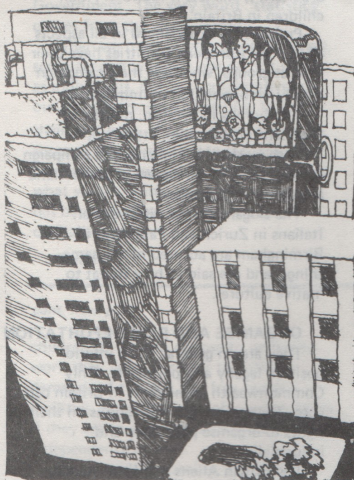
## QUESTION OF PRIORITIES

But why do tenants get into arrears? For many the reason is simple - they cannot under any circumstances afford to pay. For others it is a question of foregoing something else or get into arrears. As the GLC admit "... there are also a substantial proportion (of tenants) whose incomes are sufficient to meet the rent but who give low priority to the payment of rent as compared with other demands."

(Report of Housing Management Committee, GLC 4/9/75.) It is a question of priorities. They spell this out even more clearly - "The level of rent arrears is affected by bank holidays, particularly at Christmas and Easter when the closing of post offices and extra domestic expenditure cause rent payments to be missed (my emphasis). Put bluntly this means - do you buy Christmas presents for your kids or pay the rent."

In our case we fell behind for two reasons. Firstly because we didn't really know we were doing so - this is easy to do with the giro payment system (we have no rent book as such), and secondly because we preferred to take the children on holiday. Living on the 19th floor of a tower block makes you question which is more important, giving yourself and the kids a break to save your mental health or paying an exorbitant rent.

Anyway we paid up when I got my grant and no more was heard from them.



## WHY SUCH TACTICS?

The council is playing god because it's in deep financial trouble - hardly surprising when it spends over £3 million on a new civic centre and offices which will be used mostly by the bureaucrats. Indeed to pay for this centre it was felt necessary to cut off the grants to our local playgroups. Also it's doing all in its power to limit and control Chiswick Womens Aid Centre and other community projects. Basically though, it's due to the continuing crisis and cutbacks in government spending and high loan repayment. Once again we're being asked to pay for the crisis caused by a social system which doesn't benefit us.

The council is using these evictions notices because they reach tenants who

they're isolated. It's embarrassing to receive one, so most folk don't talk about it - they just frantically try to find some way to pay. Nice and easy for the council, guaranteed results, what does it matter the anguish they cause tenants? They get us when we're on our own and beat us as individuals.

## TENANTS ASSOCIATION

The tenants association seems the obvious place to fight back, but it's worse than useless. It's main interest seems to be complaining about other tenants. Those that keep pets (against the rules), children playing on the estate, rent arrears - these are all subject to attack at tenants association meetings on our estate. The association is run by the local Labour Party. This in part explains the situation. Their futile dreams of "bits of socialism now" lead them to expect a self-managed estate if they act as the *council's police force* amongst the tenants. Also bribes like the new community centre (which will be useful though) help them toe-the-line.

As long as the association remains this way, nobody is going to bother to go along apart from the faithful - meetings of 30-50 are held on an estate of 3000!!

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

We must demand that housing be seen as a *fundamental social right* not a privilege that can be removed for non-payment of rent.

We must agitate around the estates on this basis, to build genuine tenants groups to defend victimised tenants and prevent evictions.

Attempts must be made to agitate within the tenants associations, where this fails alternative groups must be established.

Any council tenants in the London Borough of Hounslow wishing to discuss this, please write to BM c/o London Group.

## DISCUSSION MEETING - London

"Housing Struggle"

3.30pm Saturday 24th January

Centro Iberico

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# immigrant workers

CAPITALISM has always been organised on a world basis. Problems in Europe have been solved at the expense of the workers of the rest of the world. The most recent example is the use of immigrant labour.

After World War II there was a strong movement of the working class for change. This did not seek to destroy capitalism, but the workers were unwilling to accept the unemployment of the Thirties.

Capitalist economies, however, require what Marx called a 'reserve army of labour' ie unemployment. So, faced with the political impossibility of such an army at home, capitalism developed one abroad.

At first these were displaced people from Central Europe, known in Britain as 'voluntary workers'. Later they came from further afield. This development was not confined to Britain — in fact we have relatively fewer than many other countries. Today about 14% of manual workers in Western Europe are immigrants. In Switzerland about half are.

These workers come from different areas. In Britain there are many Irish, and of course those from the Commonwealth, such as India and the West Indies, but also many from Spain, Greece, etc.

France obtains many from the former North African colonies, such as Algeria, and also from Spain. People go to Germany from Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece. A large proportion of those in Switzerland are from the south of Italy.

Wherever they come from, they face similar situations when they arrive (and they left similar conditions of backwardness and poverty behind, also).

## WHO DOES THE DIRTY WORK?

They have the worst jobs. In Britain they run the buses and do the dirty work in the hospitals. This applies to the doctors as well as the cleaners — immigrant doctors get the worst jobs in the worst hospitals.

In other countries they man the production lines. Everywhere they do the jobs that natives won't do. And everywhere they concentrate in certain sectors.

If they try to advance, they face discrimination, both institutional and conscious. A recent PEP survey showed that immigrant school-leavers were at a disadvantage compared to native children with the same qualifications, and that the better-educated they were the worse they were treated.

They live in worse housing. This arises partly from their low pay, partly from prejudice, and partly from the requirements of councils, etc. Again, a recent report showed how the rules on



allocation of council houses acted against immigrants in England.

The slums of Brixton are much better, however, than some of the shanty-towns (bidonvilles) of France and other countries.

Not surprisingly, this leads to ill-health. Tuberculosis is widespread amongst immigrants, and most cases are acquired after arrival. (Germany, for example, sets strict medical tests for would-be 'Gastarbeitern'). Rickets is found in Asian children in Britain.

Prejudice is experienced in all aspects of life. All European countries have their Fascist groups, who base their campaign largely on opposition to immigrants.

Fire-bombs in Brixton, murder of Algerians in Marseilles, attacks on Turkish workers in Holland, the campaign for exclusion of foreigners in Switzerland are part of one process.

The slogans do not differ either. Italians in Zurich and Pakistanis in Birmingham are accused of the same things, and are said to be a threat to 'native culture'.

## ORGANISE AND RISK DEPORTATION

They are, in general, in an inferior position legally and politically. Only Commonwealth immigrants in Britain can vote. There are often restrictions on their rights to organise politically and industrially.

The British Aliens Act for instance, restricts the right of foreigners to organise except in their own factory. The possibility of using it against a left-wing lecturer at Warwick University was discussed (see the Penguin book *Warwick University Ltd*).

Even where there is not a specific limitation, the general power of police and employers can be used to discourage political activity. In the Nurses' dispute last year many foreign nurses were threatened with dismissal and deportation.

Some employers deliberately employ illegal immigrants, who have no rights at all. At the same time, many come from countries such as Iran and Spain, and the European authorities work with the agents of the dictator to stop political activity amongst migrants.

The position of Commonwealth immigrants in Britain has been better than that of other migrants. The political rights are greater, although they can still be deported. At one time they could come freely. One consequence is that there are many more families.

Amongst other migrants there are few women. This situation is changing. Successive Immigration Acts bring the laws closer to this for aliens.

Immigrant workers are treated even worse by trade unions than the natives. Many unions simply ignore them, but others actively discriminate.

In the past few years there have been several strikes by Asian workers in Britain, particularly in the textile industry, which were almost all attacked by the unions, and often by native workers.

## RACE AND CLASS STRUGGLE

Liberals of all parties try to solve these problems by legislation. This means asking the capitalist state to attack the system on which it depends. Not surprisingly, such attempts have failed.

The Race Relations Acts have not prevented discrimination (and nor will the proposed laws against sex discrimination), nor have they stopped Powell and the National Front from spreading racist ideas; but they have given the police and courts weapons to use against political activists of all races.

The same happened with the Public Order Act, which was supposed to be aimed at Fascists.

Socialists not only recognise that the position of immigrants is an integral part of capitalism which can only be altered by its abolition, but also that migrant workers themselves have an important role to play in the class struggle.

Because they are the first to suffer from the crisis of capitalism they will be forced to oppose it sooner and more rapidly than the native workers.

Because they are not part of the nation politically they are less likely to accept the appeals to the 'national interest' or demands for national state-capitalism.

Because they have so often been attacked by unions, they are less inclined to trust them or their hangers-on of the white left.

Already there have been militant actions by sections of foreign workers. For instance, Turkish workers in London cafes struck in support of the Shrewsbury pickets, whilst the TUC and unions waffled on.

The future will doubtless see many more actions by migrant workers against all aspects of their oppression.

Phil McShane



ON 26-27 September about 25 statistical workers from technical schools, universities, research units and Government met in the Ladbroke Grove Urban Studies Centre, London. The word "radical" is an umbrella term covering a variety of political views and attitudes to statistics.

The discussion took much longer than the organising group had expected, most people taking an active part, and after one and a half mentally exhausting days we had scarcely got through half the program. We didn't reach the planned discussion on the role of statistics in a future socialist society, which I was going to open. This was just as well, because I haven't worked out my ideas on it yet.

These are my first impressions of what happened as I remember things a month later. First, there was an extremely difficult and abstract (at least for those without knowledge of philosophical thought) discussion of whether the basic assumptions of statistics were so influenced by the interests of the ruling class that it is impossible to be radical *and* a statistician — we have to be radical anti-statisticians.

Most of us couldn't quite swallow this, and though that statistics *could* be used to work for a new society, though a lot of work would be needed to develop new concepts, get rid of biased assumptions, find the information we are interested in. Radical Statistics study groups are trying to do this in various fields — health, prices and incomes, education, teaching statistics.

We discussed whether to try to set up a network to give statistical support to community and other radical groups who request it. Some thought that it would undermine people's confidence in their own abilities if we came along as 'the experts'. Others thought we could avoid taking over, and demystify statistics, if we worked with groups in the right way.

There was also the problem of which groups we would help. Is demystifying statistics in itself radical, even on behalf of the National Front, say? As we mean different things by 'radical', how do we decide what groups are radical? One sister mentioned the case of a Northamptonshire village whose land the local council wanted to obtain to build houses on, with the council using population projections which were probably faulty. We disagreed on which was the radical side here; perhaps it was a fight between property speculators on one side and wealthy farmers on the other!

We decided that those who wanted to could get together to set up this advice network. I'm a bit out of touch at the moment, so I don't know if it has been.

One subject we could unite on was the threat of redundancies which many statistical workers face as the economic

crisis becomes more severe. When our employers have to cut costs, frills like research units are the first to go. Statisticians on the whole may not think of themselves as "workers" (nor of course would many manual workers think of them as part of the working class), but when they get the chop they find out what their real social position is.

Twelve people stand to lose their jobs when the Social Science Research Council Survey Unit is abolished next year, their contracts being cut off in the middle. The cut is being contested by the staff of all SSRC units, with the backing of the AUT. How much of a fight will be put up, in view of the low level of solidarity, is another question. Further information from John Utting or Cathy Marsh, Survey Unit, Regent House, 89 Kingsway, London WC2B 6RH (tel. 831 6951).

None of this is very dramatic or revolutionary, of course, but it is still a significant step forward for a group of workers so deeply integrated into the capitalist system as statisticians. Statisticians have not usually seen themselves as separate from, let alone opposed to, their masters in industry and Government. The very word "statistics" comes from the word "State".

When we meet in official conferences, seminars and whatnot, we do not speak as individuals, but as representatives of our employers, discussing how to solve their problems. If now for the first time some of us are meeting to question, in however hesitant a way, who we are and what we are doing, then perhaps water has begun to flow beneath the ice of capitalist power.

Stefan

cont. from p. 12

children. If women choose to go out to work they must push for the other demands of the W.L.M., free nursery facilities, equal pay and job opportunities, if they are to gain the same level of independence as men.

But a word of warning, instead of dependence on men we could then be dependent on the state and under its control. Laws introduced giving the state power to remove mistreated children from their parents could be used against any parent to whom the state objected. It is not too far fetched to imagine the situation of a woman who having rejected the wife/mother role is sacked by the state, which removes its children to what it sees as a more suitable employee.

## EQUALITY IN OPPRESSION!

Wages for housework or child-rearing would not be an advance for the working class as a whole even though it may be for some working class women. It would not redistribute wealth from the capitalist class to the working class, but merely redistribute poverty amongst the working

# REVIEW

**Little Girls** by Elena Gianini Belotti, translated from the Italian and published by the *Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative* (14 Talacre Rd., London NW5 3PE), 85p.

Giogetto watches the little girls play shop. . . he approaches the teacher and asks in a voice so strangled that he must repeat himself, if he can play with the girls.

"With the girls!" the teacher repeats, scandalised. She takes the child by the shoulders — as if she had suddenly been struck with shame and pity for him — and embraces him. The child blushes, visibly embarrassed, and tries to extricate himself with dignity by stating in an uncertain voice, "But I wanted to be the supplier?"

This passage stirred vague memories in me of a similar reaction when I wanted to try some needlework at primary school. The book, published in Italy two years ago, is about how children are forced into rigid models of 'feminine' and 'masculine' behaviour attitudes, concentrating on the first few years of life in home and nursery school.

The author directs the Montessori Prenatal Centre in Rome and teaches at the Montessori teacher-training state school. She shows in great detail how parents, other children, children's books, toys and her fellow nursery teachers separate children into opposed groups of boys and girls, suppressing the vigour and independence of the girls and the sensitivity of the boys.

Ironically it is mainly women — mothers and nursery teachers — who, brought up themselves on traditional ideas of what it means to be a man or a woman, teach children to accept discrimination against women.

cont. p. 8

class.

Nor is there any chance of this demand bringing down capitalism, on the contrary it may well strengthen the state's control over our lives which can only be to our detriment. It is important that women and men continue to reject the roles capitalism has processed them for. Though working class women can make some gains by demanding equality with men from the state, it is liable only to be granted at the expense of working class men. It is as well to bear in mind that equality for working class men and women means equality in oppression. If we want freedom and the right to self-determination it is futile to demand that the capitalist state should oblige us by handing over.

If you fell into shark infested waters you would hardly expect the sharks not to eat you, though there's no reason why you shouldn't ask.

**Sheila D. Ritchie**  
WOMENS REPORT

contains regular reports on the Womens Liberation Movement.

Available from all radical bookshops.



# Wages for housework ?

A SECTION of the Womens Liberation Movement in Britain, U.S. and Italy are demanding 'Wages for Housework' from the state. In Britain they have managed to gain some publicity from the straight press, even to 15 minutes serious discussion on BBC's 'Womans Hour' (Radio 4).

However the written response from women listeners was overwhelmingly opposed to the idea and those in favour mainly tongue-in-cheek. What then is this demand all about, what do these women want, why and what do they hope to gain from this demand?

## ALL WOMEN ARE HOUSEWIVES?

Firstly they say that all women are housewives, married or single. By this they mean that from birth girls are socialised for the role they are to play later in life — that of wives and mothers. This is done through encouraging girls to play with dolls — substitute babies — dressing and feeding them etc., as well as sewing, cleaning and cooking with toy substitutes. As the girl grows older she gives up her toys for the real thing, helping mummy with cooking, cleaning, shopping and washing.

The male child is also socialised but for a different role, that of worker, soldier and head of the household. His toys and games are designed to encourage his independence, initiative and creativity. Men sell their labour power to the capitalist boss — private or state — while women service them i.e. sexually, internally by feeding them and externally by cleaning, nursing and caring for them. By servicing the workforce she is also giving a service to the bosses which they do not pay for, as well as another service to boss and state, that of reproducing the future workforce and servicing them. All this she does for free to the benefit of capitalism. Now some women say that capitalism through the state should be made to pay all women for their services.

## WORKING FOR PIN-MONEY!

Because both married and single men are paid the same rate for the job (though married men get tax relief) a family must live off the same income as a single person. To make-ends-meet many women are forced to take a second job. This second job predominantly tends to be in line with her role as service worker; secretary, nurse, cook, cleaner, teacher, social worker etc.. Though she is paid for this work, the rate is low. Women, like immigrant workers, tend to be the least organised, least militant and form a pool of excess labour that can be drawn on in time of boom and in slump used as a

threat to keep wages down and profits up.

Besides she is encouraged by her role training to think of waged work as a second job, she believes it is better for her to be unemployed as she's only working for 'pin-money', than for the 'bread-winner' to be unemployed.

It is that attitude that reinforces her role and disinterest in organising and his role of a lifetime condemned to wage slavery, and strengthens the bosses' ability to keep her wages low.

## THE REJECTION OF ROLES

From these observations the conclusion is drawn that the state should pay women for their first job so that they need not take on a second one. That all women should receive a wage because they are women. This, they say would separate the woman from the job.

But would it? Many women are rejecting the role of houseworker and childbearer (though as yet in small ways it is still a start in the right direction). Few young women are content with a day's waged work followed by an evening of unpaid work, while their husbands read the newspaper or watch TV. A glance at the local papers weekly list of decrees nisi granted, reveals that divorces are predominantly instigated by women. Women no longer need to put up with all that their mothers did. The whole womens liberation movement is a rejection of role training.

Yet these women are demanding that we should be paid for that role, this, they say is the most revolutionary demand for the whole working class. NO, on the contrary it is the most reactionary, for far from destroying women's role it only serves to reinforce it. What we don't want is to be compensated for being socialised into the role of service worker, for that would give justification to the process being continued.

The demanding of higher wages for any form of labour is only a defense against capitalist exploitation, not an attack on it. The economic line taken by trade unions for instance, doesn't question how useful the work of its members is to society. Far from encouraging workers to reject that role, along with the political left, they encourage the mistaken belief in "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay". There is nothing 'fair' in love, war or capitalism.

## CAPITALIST RETALIATION

The demand that women should be paid for being women, is obviously not going to succeed. As the service of women to the workforce produces nothing tangible that the capitalist can sell. The

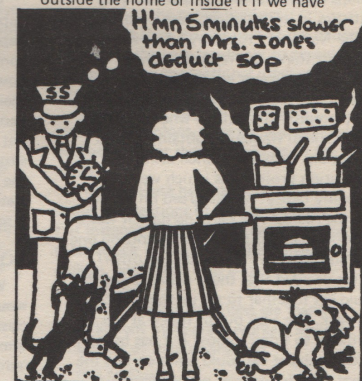
service is only indirect to the capitalist anyway. If capitalist profits were squeezed by further taxation in order for the state to pay women a wage, if they didn't actually take their capital elsewhere, they would certainly retaliate. They could do this either by increasing prices and therefore decreasing all wages, or forcing down men's wages, or employ women instead of men using their state paid wages as a subsidy for low wage-rates.

## A MAJOR ADVANCE?

Why then make this demand at all? Many left-wing groups believe that by demanding the impossible from the capitalist state, it will somehow be weakened and eventually disintegrate. This is wishful thinking. Time and time again capitalism has shown its resilience to impossibilist demands. The state is more likely to take the wind out of this campaign, if it thought a groundswell of support existed (which doesn't at present) by its partial cooption. All men could be taxed as single and what previously took the form of tax relief for fathers could be substituted for a new form of family allowance. The state could make the payment to any woman or man who stayed at home to rear children.

Capitalism in times of boom could afford this. It would be a major advance for mothers giving them the economic independence from men and avoid the splitting of one parent families. Although mothers and fathers would thus be enabled to swap roles, the division of labour could remain untouched. So that the wage in itself does not break down the oppression of roles but only makes the role more palatable.

Never the less women should campaign to be treated as whole people and not as an appendage to men. We should be able to choose between independence through waged work outside the home or inside it if we have





# SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Paper of the Social Revolution group. No.4 8 pence

## HOUSING CUTS

Council Housing  
in Birmingham.



## What are we defending?

**SUBSTANTIAL** cuts have already been made in this year's housing budgets by local authorities throughout the country, and even bigger cuts are planned for the next two financial years. All this in a situation where there are 100,000 people homeless, 170,000 construction workers on the dole and huge stockpiles of bricks.

Initially the cuts will mean lowered maintenance standards and increased council house rents, as well as a general slowing down in the pace of redevelopment, and improvements to property. In the longer term it will inevitably involve a reduction in the standards and/or levels of house building. In short the government's plans mean a

steadily deteriorating environment for us all on top of high unemployment, short time working, inflation and wage cuts.

Clearly these attacks on our standard of life must be resisted, but precisely because the effects of these cuts won't all be felt immediately by most workers, it is extremely difficult to organise such resistance. A massive propaganda campaign is a first essential. Some of the groundwork has already been done by people like Counter Information Services with their publication "*Cutting the Welfare State*" (45p + post from 9 Poland St., London SW1X 8DZ.), but most of the information must be sought out directly from

cont. p.2



## where we're at

Throughout the world a small minority of bosses — private capitalists or State bureaucrats — own and control the means of life: the factories, laboratories, communications and all the other resources we depend on. They leave the rest of us with no choice but that of working for them — in boring, usually socially useless or harmful, and often dangerous jobs outside the home, and bringing up kids for the same kind of life inside the home. They let us produce goods and services only when they can make a profit by selling them, in complete disregard of human needs, so that mountains of food are destroyed while millions starve who can't afford to buy it, so that people rot in slums while building workers are laid off. And when the trade wars between the bosses of different countries hot up into the real thing, it's the rest of us, the working people, who have to make the weapons and are sent off to kill one another.

But plenty of us refuse to put up with it all without a fight. In our workplaces we organise to defend living standards and to gain some control over conditions of work. In the community we form tenants' associations, resist motorways and try to stop pollution. School and college students challenge the way they are indoctrinated. Women, gays, black people fight the discrimination they suffer. Socialists try to spread awareness of the need for a complete change to a free classless society.

These, and others, are all valid ways for working people to express their needs as human beings and resist their conditions of life. Members of the SOCIAL REVOLUTION group are all involved in one or more of these movements. We aim to encourage people to organise democratically without leaders, and to exchange experiences and understandings so that all the different struggles can merge, with one another and across national frontiers, into a united and conscious movement for world social revolution.

The liberation of the working class can only be the work of the majority of working people themselves. The manipulation of self-appointed leaders can only hold back this work. We expect that the main form of organisation for carrying out revolutionary change will be some kind of WORKERS COUNCILS — that is, councils of delegates based on workplaces and neighbourhoods, elected by and under the direct democratic control of working people. These councils will co-operate to produce and distribute the goods and services needed by the community, which will be made freely available as the waste of capitalism is done away with. Work will be the voluntary and varied activity of people controlling their own creativity for agreed human purposes. The united world, without money, Government or war, will belong for the first time to the people of the world.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION group will not be telling anyone to "follow us", or issuing calls to "build the revolutionary party" as if it were some universal panacea to the problems facing our class. But revolutionary groups do have a role to play in the struggle for socialism. These groups should attempt to clarify issues, to attempt to show the links between seemingly isolated and unconnected activities and struggles — to show that these are linked in the overall fight to overthrow this rotting corpse of a social system, capitalism, and replace it by a democratic society with people producing for use not profit.

"SOCIAL REVOLUTION" is produced by different local groups taking it in turn to edit and layout each issue. We do this in order to attempt to break down the divisions of labour imposed by modern society.

We have decided to increase the size and frequency of "Social Revolution", and to discontinue production of "Libertarian Communism", our discussion journal. We are investigating the possibility of producing a libertarian discussion journal jointly with the Anarchist Workers Association and Solidarity. We are aiming to bring out the new "Social Revolution" once every two months, with 16 or 20 pages. We have not yet decided on the price but the larger size will inevitably mean an increase on the present 8p. Our aims in making this change are to use our limited resources more effectively and to use the space in the bigger SR to go into more issues in more depth.

*Editing and lay-out of this issue of Social Revolution was by Aberdeen Group. Published June 1976.*

### CUTS CUTS cont. from p.1

workers in the different services in each locality. This is already being done by some local 'committees against the cuts' uniting rank and file activists in the different services, as well as tenants and womens groups. These campaigns have also temporarily united the various radical political groups, and we are ourselves involved in some of these local committees.

#### A CRITICAL CAMPAIGN

Our activity, both independently and within the local and national campaigns has not, however, meant suppressing our criticisms of the services (in this case housing) which we have been making all along. Criticism of the existing services, both their internal organisation and relationship to the rest of society, and the exploration of alternatives is vital for at least one of two reasons. Firstly, a successful widespread campaign against the cuts — which the government and employers clearly need to try and make British capitalism more competitive (by cutting the rate of inflation and taxes on profits) — would make the crisis still worse. A campaign based simply on a gut reaction against the cuts, without understanding the reasons for them and an alternative way out, would inevitably falter and eventually become demoralised, with reaction setting in, the cuts merely having been postponed. More likely however, is that the realistic British workers will not get involved in

# housing

such campaigns at all unless they see the possibility of an alternative way of running the services.

Most of the left wing have been playing down the criticisms they were previously making to try and avoid alienating the left in the Labour Party and trade unions. Of course this has been fairly easy for them precisely because their criticisms are anyway far less fundamental than our own. They have all agreed that progress in housing has meant extending and reforming the *existing* state provision of housing and control of the environment. None have challenged this assumption although they have fought bitterly over differences about the extent, pace and form of that state control.

The more 'extreme' left wing groups would agree with our proposal that housing should be a 'right' available according to need, without payment of rent. But again they see this as a programme to be achieved through extension and reform of the existing set-up, with working class action limited to putting 'pressure' on the authorities, rather than *part* of a programme to be *directly instituted* by the self-organisation and action of ordinary working people. Hence the luke-warm support given by most of the traditional left press to 'squatting' and the attempts to divert tenant self-activity during rent strikes towards electing Labour councillors and MPs "on a genuine socialist programme". Our approach has been exactly the opposite of this, because from the beginning we have opposed the bureaucratic and paternalistic organisation and attitudes of the state's housing provision, which has been totally inefficient even on its own terms, yet alone in solving our housing problems as *we see them*.

#### COUNCIL REDEVELOPMENT

The post-war slum clearance programmes, the pride and joy of local (particularly Labour) councils are a prime example of their bureaucratic approach to the housing problem and imprisonment within the market economy. Of course there were and still are hundreds of thousands of houses fit for nothing except demolition, but no-one who has seen the vast expanses of derelict and cleared sites in the inner city areas, unmatched even by the war-time blitz, can really believe it's been a sound and humane policy.

Whole areas of working class housing, genuine communities, have been razed to the ground and their



## COUNCIL TENANTS

Protest has also come from the tenants of existing council estates against the dead hand of bureaucracy in their management and everyday running of the estates. Demands for greater control over estates and community facilities have often accompanied the great struggles against rent increases.

In response to this and in an effort to stifle any real action against the cutbacks, councils have been developing several strategies. One of the main strategies is the sponsoring of tenants associations (especially on new estates) which local councillors and the local Labour Party power elite are able to dominate, thus ensuring a safety valve for tenants' frustrations.

The general approach of the Labour Party was well illustrated by an earlier unsuccessful parliamentary bill pioneered by the Fabians. This sought to set up 'Housing Advisory Committees' with half the membership appointed by the council from among their tenants to advise on maintenance and amenities on council estates. There would also be a sub-committee for particular estates and 2 tenants on the Council Housing Management Committee. (See *Housing and Class Struggle* by Ed Russell, 10p + post from 8 Portland Court, St Peters Way, London N1) This was a clear attempt to create structures that would integrate tenant dissatisfaction and prevent the emergence of genuine



# should be a right

inhabitants drafted to more remote concrete housing estates on the outskirts of the city, where land is cheaper and the planners and architects have a 'blank sheet' upon which to express their 'artistic' talents unrestrained by the considerations of existing people and places. Politically also it has been far more advantageous to publicise the impressive numbers of slums cleared (and to a lesser extent houses built), than to invest in complicated programmes of renewal, modernisation and infill building.

There has over the last few years been a growing protest against these programmes of wholesale demolition. The state has responded with the provision of 'General Improvement Areas' and 'Action Areas' where designated areas within cities are given special treatment involving private improvement, infill building and environmental works (parking and play areas, tree planting, road closures etc).

Predictably it has been the more articulate and vocal 'middle class' areas that have benefited most from the availability of these schemes. Even then the schemes have been few and far between, restricted mainly to areas of historic and aesthetically pleasing buildings — local showpieces (see 'the Barnbury Scandal' in the *Recurrent Crisis of London* CIS, 60p).

Their application to other areas has been unpopular with councils and their staffs because of their extremely complicated nature, with hundreds of different property ownerships, numerous different statutory bodies and myriads of different statutes and financial allocations — they are an administrative nightmare! The physical approach of continuous adaption, renewal, modernisation and partial redevelopment is obviously best suited to the needs of community involvement and control over the planning process, but it is ill-adapted to the needs of bureaucratically organised 'outside' housing agencies.

In opposing the Labour Party's approach to the housing problem we don't want to add fuel to the Tories' approach, which is based on antiquated notions about private property rights that are equally obstructive to genuine community planning and control of the environment. Some of the points we have made here, have indeed also been made by Tories over recent months, but this has just been a camouflage for their attempts to restrict public spending on housing even further than their Labour colleagues.

democratic opposition groups.

Another strategy adopted more recently has been the setting up of tenants co-operatives with the rules laid down by the council. Again this has been used to try and make tenants take upon themselves the responsibility for effecting the councils housing cuts particularly in respect to maintenance, (this is made quite clear in the Department of the Environment circular 8/76. 16/1/76).

Not that this strategy has always worked the way they wanted — attempts to impose a co-operative on the GLC Wellington Mills estate met with considerable local opposition. We wouldn't be opposed to all co-ops on principle where these were organised by the tenants themselves with the council retaining full liability for financing — this would involve a bit more tenant control, but it wouldn't really solve any of the basic problems which arise outside the confines of the estate.

The replacement of the private by the state landlord has some advantages. Personal identification of small landlords with their property has created some of the most strained landlord/tenant relationships and this experience is still common to hundreds of thousands, especially furnished tenants in the big cities. No doubt most of these people would prefer a council flat or house.

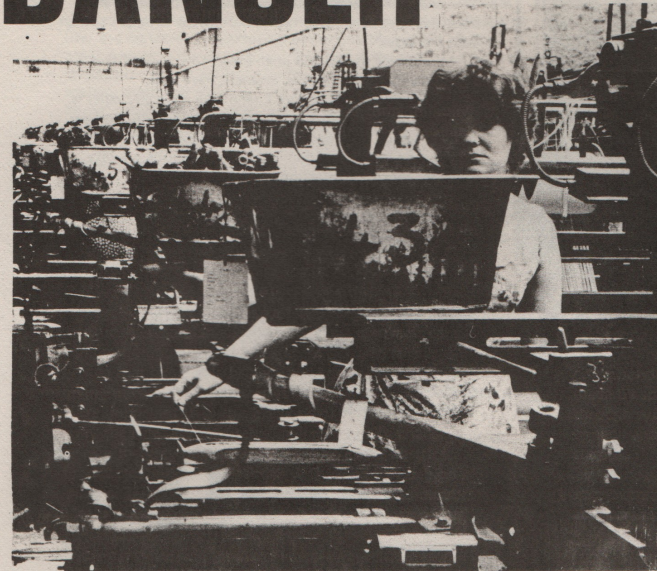
The larger investment companies concerned about nothing but immediate profits are generally worse than the council, whose rented properties are only indirectly linked to the profits of capitalism, through the councils borrowing on the investment market and payment to private house builders. Initially the development of council housing was both a result of, and in turn reinforced housing, as a political issue subject to open 'public' debate and influence. However, far from these schemes of "municipal socialism" gradually expanding and transforming the rest of society, it is they that have been transformed (see 'Free Offer' in *SR* 2). Starting off in a paternalistic fashion under the influence of the Fabians, they have become further and further integrated into the world of 'big business' and more and more bureaucratic in their organisation.

## CHANGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This has in practice been the trend throughout local government as a whole. In terms of sheer size modern councils are very important institutions. The West Midlands *cont.*



# DANGER WORK CAN DAMAGE



EVERY DAY the lives of ordinary men and women are placed at risk simply because they go to work. At work they are exposed to every kind of health hazard, from dangerous chemicals to excessive noise; from unsafe machines and out-of-date equipment to the materials used in the construction of the buildings they work in. Often people are placed in danger as result of careless management attitudes and ignorance of the work processes and materials.

It's not that our knowledge of the hazards of work is small, but that the results of research are not made widely known. Authority has proved useless at both protecting and informing people at risk, because companies (private and nationalised) are in business to make

profits: protective clothing and the banning of dangerous chemicals costs money — an instance in which the search for profits kills.

Asbestos is one typical example of a dangerous material in everyday use. Nobody knows what level of exposure is either harmful or fatal. One brief exposure to asbestos fibres can result in their being lodged in a person's lungs, causing cancer years later — perhaps long after it is possible to identify the source. For many years asbestos was thought to be harmless, but even when the truth was discovered publication of early reports was suppressed.

Preventive measures cost money, and rather than give in to pressure from the shop floor, companies will transfer production to other countries, where

workers are less well organised. Workers in Britain now face a choice of being unemployed or unemployable through illness. In Denmark any shop steward who thinks a new substance may be dangerous has the right to shut down the plant and call the factory inspectorate. We have no such "right" under British law: as always we can only rely on ourselves, and must take direct action — the one sure way to safety.

Women workers particularly are liable to risk from dangerous chemicals. The woefully inadequate standards laid down (which are often not enforceable) are based on an "average" 70 kilo man. Many chemicals cause particular female cancers, birth defects and miscarriages, and recent research indicates a strong possibility that contact with some chemicals during pregnancy can result in cancer being passed to the embryo or to the newborn baby through nursing. Men can also pass on diseases that cause congenital birth defects and cancers.

At present, over two million workers in the UK are subjected to dangerously high noise levels likely to affect their hearing. The Factory Inspectorate Code of Practice in relation to noise suggests a level of no more than 90 decibels for an eight hour day, yet between 5 and 10% of people exposed to this level throughout their working lives will suffer loss of hearing — some seriously. In fact, hearing damage starts at 80dB.

It is important to remember that the range of intensity between loud and small sounds is such that it cannot be measured on a normal scale, so sound intensity is measured on a scale based on multiples of 10. eg 10dB is ten times as loud as 0dB, and 20dB is 100 times as loud. In fact each increase of 3dB means that the sound has doubled in intensity: 93dB is twice as loud as 90dB. Remember this if the management try to argue that "it's only a few decibels over the limit".

## HOUSING CUTS *con. from p. 3*

Metropolitan Council is responsible for over three million people, a larger population than the whole of New Zealand, while the Greater London Council had an annual budget of around £930 million, a sum exceeded by fewer than 30 governments in the world.

Huge sums of money are borrowed in the short and long term through the stock market. Town Hall treasurers are in daily contact with stock market brokers.

The other side of the coin are the major building contracts handed out to companies like Wimpeys, Laings, McAlpine, Allons etc providing a fairly reliable source of profits for them to plan ahead. With single contracts often running into hundreds of thousands of pounds, it isn't surprising that large scale bribery and corruption, like that involving the architect Poulson, is rife.

More important than this breaking of the rules though, is the way the rules are themselves being gradually changed. Now even the very limited democracy of earlier district and county councils is in practice withering away behind the scenes. The councillors are still there elected as usual, but the process of decision making has become drained of

any real political content.

This has happened as a result of a dual attack. Firstly through the gradual erosion of local authority autonomy by central government controls exercised through the Departments of the Environment, Education and Health. These departments determine not only policy but even detailed planning through circulars and various other documents 'offering' advice ultimately tied to finance. Local authorities derive well over 50% of their finance either directly from government grants or from private loans sanctioned by central government and have very little room for manoeuvre.

Secondly with the growth of local authorities as major financial institutions their organisation has been correspondingly changed. More and more decisions are made by specialist groups of councillors and chief officers through systems of corporate management, with the full council and even many committees being mere rubber stamps.

At the same time a whole new group of public administrators drawn from the ranks of town planners, economists, surveyors and accountants is growing up with



# YOUR HEALTH

If you suspect that the noise level at work is too loud; people get ringing in the ears after a few days work, or have to shout to be heard be people only a few feet away, get it checked (a *noise torch* will give a pretty good guide) and if necessary get the source removed. Baffles and sound deflectors can be built round machinery. Ear muffs are not the answer, as they cut out all sounds, which can be dangerous — but there is a device called a *sonic ear valve* that cuts out damaging sound, but still permits conversation.

One of the major sources of danger at work is chemicals, most of which come onto the market with little or no research carried out into the likely effects on the people who work with them. There are safe limits set out by the Factory Inspectorate and these are normally referred to as TLV's (threshold limit value). TLVs are supposed to set a limit you can safely be exposed to in an 8 hour working day, but in fact TLV-values have *no legal force*. Always insist that the TLV is the maximum limit.

If you suspect a substance is dangerous find out the *exact* chemical name (as distinct from the trade name) — the warehouseman might be able to tell you, or the lorry drivers who deliver it may have the chemical formula noted on their TREM cards. If either of these fails trace it in the Chemical Society Annual Buyers Guide.

Get the Factory Inspectorate to make tests (under normal working conditions). They don't have to tell you the results, but they may do, but at least they will tell you if they think it's safe or not. You can try to persuade the management to run a survey and hold regular health checks. If you are still in doubt, contact a group such as BSSRS (see below) and ask them to analyse samples for you. Insist on good ventilation and personal protection such as masks and respirators — better still get the chemical replaced by a safe substitute.

a stake in the new system that provides them with a combination of financial privileges and personal power.

Through all these specialists all the issues to be decided are turned into purely *technical* problems, to be worked out 'objectively' through cost-benefit analysis and other techniques, as though differences of interest based on class, social group and locality just didn't exist!

This whole process is well documented in *Local Government becomes Big Business* by John Bennington (25p + post from CDP, Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SS).

The new Community Land Act (read State Land Act), intended to aid "positive community planning" and return some of the gains of development to the 'community', will in fact, almost certainly reinforce the trend of local government towards integration with 'big business' and towards bureaucratisation.

It may even weaken some of the few existing planning benefits to the working community, by making profits from land deals more important to councils than purely planning considerations.

## USEFUL PUBLICATIONS:

**The Hazards of Work** — by Pat Kinnerly, Pluto Press, 90p. A good basic handbook.

**A Cause for Concern** — by Newham Rights Centre, Pluto Press, 5p. A pamphlet on the new Health & Safety Act.

Pluto Press, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Rd, London NW1

**Guide to the Health & Safety at Work Act.** 20p from Labour Research Department, 78 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 8HF

**Safety Representatives and Safety Committees.** Free from: General Info. & Public Enquiry Point, Health and Safety Executive, Baynards House, 1 Chepstow Place, Westbourne Grove, London W2 4TF.

**Dangerous Properties of Industrial Materials.** Lists the known dangerous chemicals, and their effects. Costs £19, but should be in any large library.

**Encyclopedia of Occupational Health and Safety.** Published by the International Labour Office at £20 — again, try the library.

**Noise** — BSSRS, 20p — see below (prices exclude postage)

## ORGANISATIONS:

British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS), 9 Poland St., London W1V 3DG (01-437 2728). Can help with general info, analysing samples, and even lending some items of equipment for taking samples.

TUC Centenary Institute of Occupational Health, Keppel St., London WC1. (01-636 8636). Free analysis of samples for unions.

International Labour Office, 40 Piccadilly, London W1 (01-734 6521) information.

The address of your local factory inspectorate should be listed in the 'phone book — it's ironically listed under Her Majesty's (?) Factory Inspectorate.

## FIGHTING BACK

The Libertarian Industrial Network exists to co-ordinate libertarian militancy within industry. Already there are contacts in a number of different industries, some are listed below:

**Communications/Postal Workers**  
Phil Ruff, c/o 123 Upper Tollinton Park, London N4.

**Local Government**  
Ian S. Sutherland, 13 Deincourt Close, Spondon, Derby.

**Refuse**  
Dave Barnsdale, 16 St. Leonards Rd, Surbiton, Surrey.

**Printing**  
Albert Meltzer, 26a Eastbourne Rd., London N5.

**Unemployed Workers**  
Ron Marsden, c/o 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester.

**Health**  
Phil McShane, 11 St. Margarets Rd., Oxford.

Industrial Network Co-ordinator:  
Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Waldon, Essex.

If there is no contact listed for your industry, contact the co-ordinator, and your name can be added to the network.

At present the I.N. is aimed at the whole of the libertarian left: Anarchists, Syndicalists, Revolutionary Socialists, Solidarity, libertarian communists (including Marxists)

## AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!

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## CONCLUSION

Our campaign against the housing cuts will not gain in strength by continuing with the myths of "our great welfare state". People who have suffered at its hands are not going to swallow that, and get enthusiastic to save it in its hour of need, as though it hasn't always been in crisis.

Neither can an enlightened campaign isolate itself from the attacks being made on all the public services. If we are successful in beating off the current round of attacks, the government and employers will find themselves in a real jam. Faced with that we will either be forced to retreat, or to advance, and organise independently and democratically to take full control ourselves, not only of the housing estates and construction industry, but of the entire resources of society.

We don't want the bureaucratic control of the state, we want full democratic community control of housing and the whole environment!

MIKE BALLARD

*Note: This article has covered a lot of ground in a short space. We would welcome articles from sympathisers covering some of the issues in more detail.*



# GRAPES OF WRATH

**You've heard of pasteurised milk, and you've heard of homogenised milk. Now you're in for harmonised milk!**

What on earth...? Well, the milk you have drunk up to now contains about 3.8% butter-fat. But on the Continent they skim fat off to 3.5%. As there is free trade among member countries of the Common Market, regulations have been pushed through Parliament allowing this skimmed milk to be imported. This is called harmonisation.

The quality of British-produced milk will be affected too. Milk producers in Belgium, Holland, France can reach the big London market more easily than farmers in Scotland, say, or Northern Ireland. The watery stuff will be cheaper than real milk so British suppliers will have to skim off their milk too, in order to compete. (Incidentally to produce this skimmed milk they will have to install expensive new machinery).

January 15, the House of Commons, midnight. In the holies of holies of our democratic way of life a handful of MP's (those suffering from insomnia) debate. Points out Peter Mills, Honourable member for West Devon: *"The Minister does not realise that big money is involved, which is why the Community (that is, the Common Market) wants harmonisation."* Yes "big money" first, "consumer rights" also ran.

And how come you've not heard about all this before?

I couldn't explain that any better than Mrs Dunwoody, Labour Member for Crewe. So I quote:—

"My Honourable Friend (*she means the Minister*) is not being 100 per cent honest with us in coming here to say that we still have decisions to reach and a certain time before we need take a decision. I think he knows that the pressures on the country are considerable. He knows that it is probably typical of the way in which so many Community policies are implemented that measures of this kind are brought before the House late at night when nearly everyone has gone home and there will not even be any Press coverage. It will be a miracle if one word that is said by any Honourable Member in this debate is reported to the general public. The policy is to slip these matters in at night and thus make it difficult for people to get to know about them; and by the time they get to know, it will be difficult for them to take any effective action."

And William Ross (Londonderry) complained that "the Regulation has been put on the Order Paper in a most obscure way". Perhaps he expected them to put down "Regulation for Watering Down Your Milk"?

Don't assume that the MP's who are fussing are worried about the consumers. Most of them come from agricultural areas and are concerned with the business interests of farm owners. If it was *British* farmers diddling you, you wouldn't hear a squeak from them.

As Mrs Dunwoody cuts the cackle and talks quite straight, we'll quote more from her speech:—

"At present the Common Market has about one million tonnes (that's your new metric ton, a bit more than the old British ton) of skimmed milk. In Great Britain most butter-fat is drunk in milk. In Europe it is skimmed off and then, as the butter can't be used, fed to animals.

When those of us who are involved with the agricultural committees of the Common Market ask why this should not be considered as a form of food aid, we are told that the Commission does not feel that skimmed milk beyond a certain amount should be fed to human beings outside the Common Market, irrespective of their needs and the fact that many of them are starving to death. They are putting it in animal feed because the price must be absorbed somewhere.

Let us suppose that we conform to this 3.5 per cent butter-fat content. Are we to skim milk? If we do, will that contribute to the skimmed milk powder mountain? If it does, what is to be done with it? Will it be fed to animals, or shall we export it? If we export it, in what form and where will it go? After all, the Commission has said that it may not be part of the food aid programme above a certain level."

Why can't "surplus" milk be used in food aid programmes? (Not that we think they are the answer, but we'll come back to that.) And why, for that matter, are these "surpluses" not used to restore school milk here?

Because we live in a world where everything that is produced has a price tag. Competing commercial concerns, private and State, aim to sell their products on the market — at a profit. Because if they make a profit, they can survive and expand, and if they don't make a profit, their competitors drive them to the wall and they go bust.

If food can be sold at a profit, it is sold. If it can't — dump it, destroy it, pile it up in "apple mountains" and "butter mountains" and "skimmed milk mountains". Or, better still anticipate the "problem" by giving subsidies to farmers for *not* growing crops. Give food away? No — who pays for the transport? And it delays recovery of the market by making selling even more difficult. The market system has its own remorseless logic. It won't let you mess around with that logic. You have to scrap the system itself. Start producing for human needs under community control.

No — this side of the social revolution, houses are not built to give people somewhere to live, food is not grown to be eaten, milk is not produced to be drunk. Everything for profit. Otherwise — let houses stand empty (if squatters move in, get them out). Let fruit rot in the fields, pour the milk down the drain. Smash eggs, burn coffee...

And while millions starve — a cliché but still true — what is seen as the main problem of agricultural policy? Mr Howell MP for North Norfolk, spells it out:—

"We have an extraordinarily difficult problem before us. The European dairy herd is yielding much more per cow (*it's that "surplus" butter they feed them! — Stefan*). And yet the cow numbers are static. There is therefore a continual increase in milk, and this is the main problem with which we have to grapple."

Nature is too generous! She is sabotaging the capitalist system!

And now I want to return to Mrs Dunwoody. To shatter three illusions on the subject which she shares with many other people:—

1. That, if only the milk — or skimmed milk powder — could be sent to the poor countries in food aid programmes, it would reach the starving millions;
2. That, if it could reach the starving millions — and a little of it just might — it would restore them to health and happiness;
3. That it's all the fault of the absurd Common Agricultural Policy of this Common Market into which we've been bamboozled. I was going to say "dragged", but a majority of us obediently went and voted for it.

First, then — aid to the Third World. Under the World Food Aid Programme, sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other international organisations, thousands of tons of "surplus" butter-oil and milk powder were sent to India. This went by the picturesque name of "Operation Flood". A flood of milk flows! — past the starving millions and down the drain.

The National Dairy Development Corporation was set up in India to launch "Operation Flood". You see, the flood of milk from Europe and America was somehow supposed to encourage local production, to make India "self-sufficient in milk". Of course, by competing with local farmers for the available market, it could only have the opposite effect.

And the local market was — and still is — strictly limited by the ability of people in India to buy milk. And — surprise, surprise! — the vast starving majority in India cannot afford to buy milk. Even from the handy new vending



machines, of a type abandoned in Holland because they break down so often. Well — what to do? The dairy plant in Bangalore, for example, could only sell one tenth of its milk, collected from the villages.

After all, we can hardly give the milk away for free! But it can be converted into curd, ice-cream mix and other luxury products for the more affluent section of the population. Also, in the days before the new dairies, the peasants who processed the milk in the villages had the highly nutritious curd and butter-milk to eat. Not now!

But it wouldn't be fair to say that nobody benefitted from the food aid programme. The dairy firms — Hindustan Lever, Glaxo, and local Indian firms — subsidised by it made a packet. After all, the Chairman of the National Dairy Development Corporation was a Director of the Kaira Dairy in Gujarat!

So now you know why I don't want any of your UNICEF Christmas cards!

At least the children of the under-developed countries sometimes get milk some milk from their mothers' breasts. Not if it can be helped!

The Western companies are out to sell their baby foods. In view of the filthy conditions in which most people live in these countries, bottle feeding is likely to poison and infect children. And the mothers cannot afford enough baby milk, so they dilute it — with fatal results. Meanwhile breast feeding is discouraged and bottle feeding promoted by clever advertising. And they dress up the sales-girls as nurses — what a good idea!

But groups in Europe managed to get the situation publicised. War on Want pointed out that the companies had done the same thing in Britain before the First World War. Nestles took a Swiss group who protested to Court for libel. You are besmirching our honour, our reputation! (Not to mention our profits.)

The companies reluctantly retreated before public indignation. We can start up again when the furore dies down. People forget quickly, and it's not front-page news the second time round.

Now onto our second claim. Why,

even if some milk powder does get through to badly under-nourished people, is it not of great benefit to them?

Because protein foods eaten by starving people are not kept by the body as protein, but burned up straight away for energy. Milk powder is just an inefficient way of supplying that amount of any old food — of local yam, which the refugees don't have the money to buy.

In fact, research suggests that the problem of protein deficiency in the Third World is only the result of the general problem of *not enough food*.

Surveys of nutrition in India show that those who ate a large enough quantity of food had enough protein in their diet. The staple foods of the world's peoples — rice and cereals — contain an adequate proportion of protein, the only exception being the yam, cassava and roots eaten in West Africa. People just can't afford enough food. If they could, or if — in a new society — food was distributed according to need, the technical means of producing enough would be found.

Now to the third point — does it make sense to blame the Common Market for the destruction of food? The EEC keeps its small-scale inefficient peasant farmers in business by large subsidies in the form of guaranteed prices for their products. The problem arises from their inability to sell enough at these high prices.

In Britain and North America the process of centralisation in agriculture has not been held back like this. Big mechanised farms have been allowed to drive the small farmers out. Food is sold at lower prices. In this situation food is destroyed when prices fall below profitable levels. So, whether food is cheap or expensive, the waste of the market system goes on.

In John Steinbeck's novel "The Grapes of Wrath" this destruction of food and of human beings is painfully described. As we sink into the second great depression of the century, we can think over these words from the first:—

"The decay spreads over the State, and the sweet smell is a great sorrow on the land. Men who can graft the trees and

make the seed fertile and big can find a way to let the hungry people eat their produce. Men who have created new fruits in the world cannot create a system whereby their fruits may be eaten. And the failure hangs over the State like a great sorrow.

The works of the roots of the vines, of the trees, must be destroyed to keep up the price, and this is the saddest, bitterest thing of all. Car-loads of oranges dumped on the ground. The people came for miles to take the fruit, but this could not be. How would they buy oranges at 20 cents a dozen if they could drive out and pick them up? And men with hoses squirt kerosene on the oranges, and they are angry at the crime, angry at the people who have come to take the fruit. A million people hungry, needing the fruit — and kerosene sprayed over the golden mountains.

And the smell of rot fills the country.

Burn coffee for fuel in the ships. Burn corn to keep warm, it makes a hot fire. Dump potatoes in the rivers and place guards along the banks to keep the hungry people from fishing them out. Slaughter the pigs and bury them, and let the putrescence drip down into the earth.

There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation. There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolise. There is a failure here that topples all our success. The fertile earth, the straight tree rows, the sturdy trunks, and the ripe fruit. And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange. And coroners must fill in the certificates — died of malnutrition — because the fruit must rot, must be forced to rot.

The people come with nets to fish for potatoes in the river, and the guards hold them back; they come in rattling cars to get the dumped oranges, but the kerosene is sprayed. And they stand still and watch the potatoes float by, listen to the screaming pigs being killed in a ditch and covered with quicklime, watch the mountains of oranges slop down to a putrefying ooze; and in the eyes of the people there is the failure, and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage."

This time the grapes must burst.

STEFAN.

#### WORTH READING!

**Hot Off The Press!** Libertarian Communism No.10. 22p inc. post. Articles include Ireland, BWNIC, and TOM; The Left and the General Strike; An editorial from "Combate" plus lots more. Some copies of L.C. 8 & 9 still available — 16p inc. post.

**A Contribution to the Critique of Marx** by John Crump. A joint SR-Solidarity pamphlet. 17p including post.

**Anarchist Worker**, monthly paper of the Anarchist Workers Association. 10p + post from AWA, 13 Coltman St., Hull.

**Solidarity** — a regular paper, + pamphlets on different issues. Send £2 to Solidarity, c/o 123 Latham Rd., London E6 to receive forthcoming issues of the paper and pamphlets to that value.





As the economic crisis deepens, and cuts in the education sector intensify, the *National Union of Students*, far from reacting as a confident, effective fighting organisation of students, is facing a severe crisis of its own. Two university unions, *Aston* and *St. Andrews*, have voted to disaffiliate: a number of other unions are considering such a move. Others, notably *Manchester*, have rejected disaffiliation, yet the movement in the constituent organisations of NUS for separation from the national union is gaining support from a considerable minority of students. In the Manchester disaffiliation referendum over one third of the votes cast were for disaffiliation. Why is this happening in such a 'militant', 'marxist' union? Can the 'moderate' reaction be stopped and what prospects are there for students?

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUS

Until the late 60's NUS was little more than a travel bureau/debating club, controlled by a right-wing bureaucracy. This situation changed with the radicalisation of students by such movements as the anti-Vietnam war campaigns. Since then, NUS has been controlled by the *Broad Left*, an alliance of 'left-labourites' and Communist Party members. It has launched a number of successful campaigns; around the issue of student autonomy under the last Tory government and more recently the annual grants and Education Cuts campaigns. Significant victories were scored in the early days of these campaigns: Thatcher's plans to destroy union autonomy were stopped, annual reviews of student grants were conceded. Now, however, the campaigns are being fought primarily to defend existing gains rather than achieve more.

The political inspiration behind the moves to disaffiliate is clearly provided by the *Federation of Conservative Students*: although they favour working within NUS in order to cripple it, it is their policies that are the main influence for disaffiliation: propaganda about a 'pro-Soviet', undemocratic NUS, etc, etc, is having the obvious effect of encouraging students to desert NUS. At the moment they seem to be losing influence to an extent, or at least when faced with active pro-union agitation. However, they could easily gain ground again in the near future.

Yet students do not basically form a reactionary mass; on the contrary, the political ideals of the average student are mildly radical social-democratic. The FCS and their more fascist hangers-on are making advances because *there already exists a profound disillusionment amongst students with the NUS itself*. The blame for this must lie within the NUS itself and with the leftist politicians who dominate it.

#### Anatomy of a Successful Campaign

In the early days of the NUS campaigns, significant successes were scored. The



# NUS

# WHAT NOW?

reason for this was primarily the real *mass involvement* of students. We saw widespread rent strikes, refectory boycotts and strikes/occupations in support of higher grants, as well as the regular mass demonstrations. Combined with the fact that the depression had not yet set in completely, these campaigns wrung concessions from the state. Recognising that mass self-activity leads to militancy and radicalisation, the state tried to buy off its future generations of technical and white-collar workers and management with more money: in reality this ideological

'ideological' weapon was probably the strongest in the students' armoury.

It would seem apparent that in times of crisis this kind of mass involvement is all the more necessary to halt the decline in students' living standards. To successfully do so would require an even greater consciousness, a realisation that a society based on exploitation and profit making cannot automatically satisfy our needs.

#### NUS Steps In . . . .

Faced with this new militancy, the state found itself with an unusual ally — the NUS itself. The leftist politicians running NUS were as frightened as the state of

mass self-activity by the students. Like all good union-bureaucrats they only feel safe when *they* dominate struggles, for then they can keep it within safe confines and retain their own power. To channel student discontent along 'safe' lines, the mass demonstration was developed. Originally seen by students as a sign of their solidarity and anger, it became for NUS the focus of the campaign. All else was to be subordinate to getting students out on the streets of central London; to march past Centrepont and down Oxford Street once a year. Having mobilised their camera-fodder, the bureaucrats would then go along to the *Department of Education and Science* with their figures to haggle over sums. Thus the 'mass demonstration' became a way of 'heading-off' student militancy. After four years of grants campaigns, what it had boiled down to is demoralisation and confusion amongst the mass of students, while NUS considers it's had a successful campaign if it's got 20,000 out on the streets!!

#### An Irrelevant Union . . . .

Having effectively demoralised the mass of students, NUS then proceeded to alienate them too. NUS conferences are dominated by inter-policy haggling and discussions on issues such as Ireland,



Vietnam, anti-fascism, etc. These issues are important, but in many ways are 'safe' issues, since students can do little about them in practice: meanwhile, issues on which direct action is possible are ignored. These party battles are very satisfying to the bureaucrats and would-be bureaucrats; action is seen as passing resolutions and 'supporting' this or that struggle, usually safely tucked away in another part of the world. Students are, of course, quite unable to affect these struggles anyway, but they serve the purpose of diverting attention from real issues affecting themselves. Few discussions are held on the meaning of what we're taught or our role in society (except that leftists like to see students as some intelligentsia to lead the revolution — masturbatory dreams of Russia in 1917); how we can develop real links with other workers, especially those in our own colleges, instead of through 'safe' channels of union bureaucrat to union bureaucrat; developing educations as a social right for all — throwing open our facilities, etc.

Little wonder that students see little relevance in what NUS discusses and that a growing feeling of alienation from the union develops. This leads to demoralisation and support for 'moderate' politics as exemplified by the FCS, Labour Party, etc. The role of the left in NUS is one of weakening and confusing the student body at a time when unity and strength is required beyond all else.

#### Can NUS Change?

Given the will, students can force NUS to act in a more militant way; but this could be only a temporary gain. NUS is not anti-student because it is controlled by nasty people, but because of the social role it plays, along with all other unions. If an organ of struggle is created in the course of a dispute it will reflect the wishes of its membership. When this dispute is over, the struggle dies down. Then, despite the best will in the world, bureaucratisation sets in. The elected representatives, no longer having to justify themselves constantly to the rank-and-file, fall into a position of becoming permanent negotiators with the employers, in this case the state as personified by the DES.

No longer is the issue what the membership wants, but what the employer can afford. The result is haggling over figures and then selling the compromise to the members. They begin to see things in the terms of the bosses, and ultimately become their agents. It is just possible that this process can be averted to a greater or lesser extent in a small union (like one of NUS's C.O.s) but in a union of 770,000 meeting only twice a year it is near impossible to prevent.

#### What Future for Students?

The fight against education cuts, and for

unity in the student movement, cannot be won within the context of the present social system. To the state, students represent a long-term investment that will pay off in the future in terms of higher profits derived from the highly-skilled nature of their training. But we are in an acute economic crisis, and the first things that are cut-back are long-term investments. If this means that education suffers, then it suffers; this takes the form of college closures, layoffs of staff or leaving posts vacant and decreases in the real value of grants.

Only militant direct action can prevent this from being too drastic, and then only if real links based on solidarity, friendship and understanding are forged between students and other workers. *The idea that students are some kind of elite must be got rid of.*

At best though, this will leave students still on the treadmill of constantly fighting to maintain their standards: real gains will be almost impossible to achieve: students must actively work to maintain living standards in order to avoid demoralisation and keep their confidence. The only genuine struggle with any chance of success is that for a social revolution: only a libertarian communist society can free students from the constant need to battle authority, and make genuine creative study possible. This will involve the abolition of students as a separate sector of society, education will be open to all when required and not restricted to a young, small and relatively privileged group.

#### A Strategy?

The first priority must be to restore morale and confidence amongst the mass of students, and agitating for this could centre around the following points:

- \*\* rank-and-file control over all disputes and campaigns
- \*\* real links between students and college workers, academic and non-academic and with the wider working class community
- \*\* union policy within C.O.'s to be decided by regular mass meetings open to all students, and with union executives being unable to independently place motions before meetings.

This fight will have to take place in all areas, including within the local union bodies. We must not argue for leaving unions — such a move will only strengthen the forces of right-wing reaction; rather we should realise that success will transcend the bounds of the present structures and render them meaningless; we must constantly argue the point that capitalism offers no progressive solution to the problems students face.

*Of immediate necessity is an organised libertarian communist presence within the student movement; only when we re-group our scattered forces will any progress be made. Anyone (individuals or groups) interested in building such a presence should write to us C/O London Group.*

*OIL contd. from p. 12*  
 Over Troubled Waters" the alternative offered by the Scottish National Party is examined and their policy is shown to be heavily influenced by the ambitions of a small elite of Scottish financiers, bankers, economists, and businessmen. Changing one set of rulers for another offers no solution. What is needed, it is argued, is a complete political and cultural revolution. Industries must be controlled by workers and the community. Personal relationships must be transformed, in particular there must be an end to women's oppression. We must go beyond purely rational 'scientific' thinking to incorporate into our lives "the primitive" — sexuality, the dreams and visions of our unconscious, a pre-intellectual awareness which does not separate itself from the object of its attention but is as one with what it perceives.

Unfortunately however there is no discussion of the future of the oil industry in a free socialist society. Should it be de-centralised and run under workers and community control? Or is oil technology so large-scale that it would be impossible to run the industry democratically, and so the only course would be to dismantle it? The questions of how the revolutionary transformation might take place, and of what activities people can be involved in now — both in the oil industry and in the community — to hasten that transformation, could also have been examined in more depth. However these are small failings in relation to the achievement of the pamphlet as a whole.

Following the success of "Oil Over Troubled Waters" — it is currently being reprinted, only 3 months after publication — APP intend to publish a series of investigations into local industries. The latest, included in the May issue of the monthly "Aberdeen Peoples Press", is an analysis of the crisis in Aberdeen's fishing industry.

(Available for 17p inc p&p from APP)

The development of North Sea Oil is central to Britain's economic and political future. If you want to know what is happening, and **WHAT WE COULD MAKE MAKE HAPPEN**, read "Oil Over Troubled Waters". And if you want other people to know, get your library to buy a copy and take advantage of the cheap rates for bulk orders.

—subvertisement—

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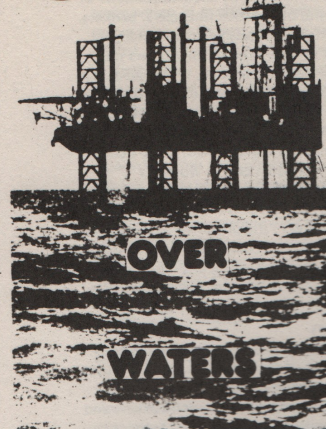
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# OIL



**Oil Over Troubled Waters**, published by Aberdeen Peoples Press, 167 King St, Aberdeen. 60 pages, 35 photos. 75p. (Discounts for orders of 6 or more — details from APP).

North Sea Oil. The saviour of the British economy? Black Gold that is bringing a bonanza of big money and high living to North East Scotland? To find out about the reality behind the government and media myths, read *Oil Over Troubled Waters*. In this Aberdeen Peoples Press special report the development of North Sea Oil is analysed in a depth which neither the left or the commercial press have yet achieved. To give a brief indication of the scope of the pamphlet, some of the ideas covered are —

How the government's licensing terms and taxation policy have benefited the oil companies — Who owns Aberdeen, plus a run-down on the oil interests of Aberdeen and Scottish capital — How the local authorities in the North East have allowed oil developments to go ahead apace, to the detriment of the community — The unsafe working conditions in diving, on the rigs, and on the supply boats, and how they are caused by the oil companies' drive to save time, and therefore make money — The struggle of the Inter Union Offshore committee to unionise the rigs against ruthless opposition from the companies — How speculators have gained from soaring land prices — Aberdeen's drastic housing problem: how Council House building ground to a halt as office blocks sprouted merrily all over the city — Working as a Welder's Mate on the pipeline: a personal account.

Oil has sparked off an intense political debate about Scotland's future. In "Oil

cont. p. 11

# NEWS

"The Dispossessed", the latest novel of the anarchist science fiction writer Ursula LeGuin, published by Gollancz, is now available in paperback. We have already reviewed the book in *Social Revolution* and at greater length in our discussion journal *Libertarian Communism*. Ursula LeGuin's portrayal of life on the planet Anarres provides an example of the kind of socialist society we'd like to see. That is why we are publishing some extracts from her work.

## FROM ANARRES

"The network of administration and management is called PDC, Production and Distribution Coordination. They are a coordinating system for all syndicates, federatives and individuals who do productive work. They do not govern persons; they administer production."

"Decentralisation had been an essential element in Odo's plans for the society she did not live to see founded. She had no intention of trying to de-urbanise civilisation. Though she suggested that the natural limit to the size of a community lay in its dependence on its own immediate region for essential food and power, she intended that all communities be connected by communication and transport networks, so that goods and ideas could get where they were wanted, and the administration of things might work with speed and ease, and no community should be cut off from change and interchange. But the network was not to be run from the top down. There was to be no controlling centre, no capital, no establishment for the self-perpetuating machinery of bureaucracy and the dominance-drive of individuals seeking to become captains, bosses, Chiefs of State."

"They knew that their anarchism was the product of a very high civilisation, of a complex diversified culture, of a stable economy and a highly industrialised technology that could maintain high production and rapid transport of goods. ... The special resources and products of each region were interchanged continually with those of others, in an intricate process of balance: that balance of diversity which is the characteristic of life, of natural and social ecology."

But ... you can't have a nervous system without at least a ganglion, and preferably a brain. There had to be a centre. The computers that coordinated the administration of things, the division of labour and the distribution of goods, and the central federatives of most of the work-syndicates, were in Abbenay ("Mind").

... Unavoidable centralisation was a lasting threat, to be countered by lasting vigilance. PDC personnel are volunteers, selected by lot — a year of training, then four years as a Listing, then out. Nobody could gain power in a system like that. 'Some stay on longer than four years.' Advisers? They don't keep the vote. 'Votes aren't important ...'

"The elements that made up Abbenay were the same as in any other Odonian city, repeated many times: workshops, factories, domiciles, dormitories, learning centres, meeting-halls, distributaries, depots, refectories. The bigger buildings were most often grouped around open squares, giving the city a basic cellular texture: it was one subcity or neighbourhood after another."

"The transport workers were the largest federative in the Odonian society: self-organised, of course, in regional syndicates which were coordinated by representatives who met and worked with the local and central PDC. The network maintained by the transport federative was effective in normal times and in limited emergencies; it was flexible, adaptable to circumstance, and the Syndics of Transport had great team and professional pride."

"PDC, the principal users of radio, telephone and mails, coordinated the means of long-distance communication, just as they did the means of long-distance travel and shipping. There being no "business" on Anarres, in the sense of promoting, advertising, investing, speculating etc, the mail consisted mostly of correspondence among industrial and professional syndicates, their directives and newsletters plus those of PDC, and a small volume of personal letters. ... Eventually a letter got to the mail depot in the town addressed, and there it lay, there being no postmen, until somebody told the addressee that he had a letter, and he came to get it."

**The Dispossessed** Panther Science Fiction 75p.

### CONTACTS

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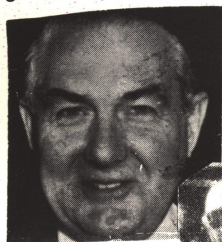
The next quarterly Social Revolution group conference will be in Aberdeen on July 3rd and 4th. Sympathisers are welcome to attend. Details from Aberdeen group.



# SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Paper of the SOCIAL REVOLUTION Group No. 5

## TUC



15p

## &



## the State

Whilst it is not unusual for workers to find that unions, and particularly the TUC, unite with the bosses to oppose them in their struggles, the current collaboration between the Government and the TUC poses the question in acute form.

This collaboration is seen in many areas. Firstly, there is the overwhelming support for the 'incomes policy' which even its defenders admit means a fall in real incomes. Secondly, the acceptance, with a few minor complaints, of rising unemployment and cuts in services.

The alternatives proposed by the TUC to current economic policy are totally reactionary, which align the TUC with the growing Fascist movement. Such a degree of class-collaboration has been seen before, for example in the period after the defeat of the General Strike, when 'Mondism' (named after its advocate, one of the bosses of ICI) was the policy. However, it is new to the post-war working-class and so must be looked at more closely.

### CRISIS AND CONFRONTATION

The growing difficulties of world capitalism became apparent in the late 60's, in the form of increasing unemployment, inflation and currency crises. Together with the political antagonism of the period, they put an end to the liberalism and low level of class conflict of the post-war period. So the states of Britain and other countries found it necessary to renew the attack upon the working-class in all spheres, and particularly the economic.

At first the British state turned to open attacks on the rights of workers. The '64-70 Labour government introduced incomes policies and tried to control the unions with the proposals of the Donovan Commission and 'In Place Of Strife' but this was opposed by the unions and many MPs, including Callaghan. The attempts of the Tories to control unions by law were even less successful.

*continued on page 16*



## about SR

SOCIAL REVOLUTION is an organisation of libertarian communist revolutionaries. We do not label ourselves as "anarchists" or as "marxists" — rather we see that the only valid revolutionary theory and practice must derive from a critical analysis of the experiences of the working class movement — both its strengths and failures.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION believes that revolutionaries must organise themselves if a revolution is to be made. We do not set ourselves up as some "vanguard" or "elite" party, but we recognise that through combined action comes strength. We see our role as being to play a part in the clarification of the real issues behind seemingly unrelated struggles, and show how they point to a socialist solution. We call upon those in general agreement with our politics to join us.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION is a membership organisation. We organise ourselves on a federal basis, i.e. membership is through autonomous groups which meet for delegate conferences every four months. The delegate conference decides overall policy, which is then implemented by the local groups according to their particular situation. These conferences also play a vital role in the clarification of our own ideas.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION sees the need for unity and co-operation among libertarians. We therefore maintain fraternal contacts with other libertarian groups both overseas and in Britain.

This edition of Social Revolution marks a departure for us in what we are trying to achieve. As from this issue we will be producing only one journal — LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM ceases publication with issue number 10. This change was decided at our spring delegate conference.

We felt that producing two journals was a meaningless exercise. Firstly because while SR was meant to be propagandist, its irregularity prevented us from producing good up-to-date material. This irregularity stemmed from the attempt to produce two regular journals.

Secondly, while SR sold nearly twice as many copies as LC, we largely felt we were duplicating effort — if they didn't go to the same people, at least they went to the same kind of people, i.e. people with at least some level of political consciousness. This is generally true of every left-wing and socialist paper produced — even though a pretence is kept up that they reach some amorphous "mass".

On the other hand to produce a "simple" paper for the "masses" is to insult the intelligence of the working class. We believe that as long as jargon is avoided then socialist ideas can be understood by anyone whose seriously wants to.

With this changeover, SR should become a more "weighty" publication — the articles will present more analysis and discussion and less emphasis on description and sloganising. We hope the result will be a more interesting publication.

Not wishing to produce a mere commodity, aimed only for archivists to read and then file away, we positively solicit contributions from readers and sympathisers. SR should now become a much more regular paper, sales are increasing and we aim to go bi-monthly. Readers can help by taking a few extra copies



## where we're at

Throughout the world a small minority of bosses — private capitalists or State bureaucrats — own and control the means of life: the factories, laboratories, communications and all the other resources we depend on. They leave the rest of us with no choice but that of working for them — in boring, usually socially useless or harmful, and often dangerous jobs outside the home, and bringing up kids for the same kind of life inside the home. They let us produce goods and services only when they can make a profit by selling them, in complete disregard of human needs, so that mountains of food are destroyed while millions starve who can't afford to buy it, so that people rot in slums while building workers are laid off. And when the trade wars between the bosses of different countries hot up into the real thing, it's the rest of us, the working people, who have to make the weapons and are sent off to kill one another.

But plenty of us refuse to put up with it all without a fight. In our workplaces we organise to defend living standards and to gain some control over conditions of work. In the community we form tenants' associations, resist motorways and try to stop pollution. School and college students challenge the way they are indoctrinated. Women, gays, black people fight the discrimination they suffer. Socialists try to spread awareness of the need for a complete change to a free classless society.

These, and others, are all valid ways for working people to express their needs as human beings and resist their conditions of life. Members of the SOCIAL REVOLUTION group are all involved in one or more of these movements. We aim to encourage people to organise democratically without leaders, and to exchange experiences and understandings so that all the different struggles can merge, with one another and across national frontiers, into a united and conscious movement for world social revolution.

The liberation of the working class can only be the work of the majority of working people themselves. The manipulation of self-appointed leaders can only hold back this work. We expect that the main form of organisation for carrying out revolutionary change will be some kind of WORKERS COUNCILS — that is, councils of delegates based on workplaces and neighbourhoods, elected by and under the direct democratic control of working people. These councils will co-operate to produce and distribute the goods and services needed by the community, which will be made freely available as the waste of capitalism is done away with. Work will be the voluntary and varied activity of people controlling their own creativity for agreed human purposes. The united world, without money, Government or war, will belong for the first time to the people of the world.

## SOCIAL REVOLUTION GROUPS

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# Problems of Socialism

THE WOMAN QUESTION  
AND LIBERTARIAN ORGANISATION!

This article originally appeared as a discussion document at our July delegate conference in Aberdeen. It provoked considerable discussion at the time. As it was felt that the issue was of more than just internal interest Sheila was asked to re-write it for publication in SOCIAL REVOLUTION.

We hope to be able to continue the discussion, and urge readers to send contributions (no more than 1500 words and double-space typed please). London group would also like to organise a discussion on the subject: please get in touch if you're interested.



As I see it there are three main areas to the problem regarding women that libertarians must face up to. In SR at the present I am the only active woman member. Ours is of course a very small group. But what seems clear, is that no matter the size of the organisation, the proportion of involved women remains small in comparison to male membership. So this leads to the first problem.

## WHY ARE SO FEW WOMEN INTERESTED IN ORGANISED POLITICS?

All political organisations have this problem, but is only a REAL problem to revolutionaries. Women's social conditioning will, as we know, be the main stumbling block to women's interest in organised politics. But it should not therefore be used as an excuse for doing nothing.

I know conditioning is not totally insurmountable. Even though my mother would pass as a radical-feminist today, she still suffered conditioning and passed it on to me. School and society did the rest.

Besides if we don't think some social conditioning can be overcome BEFORE revolution, then there isn't going to be any

revolution. The problem here is that we can't help people who are trying to break down their social conditioning unless they come to us and they're not likely to come to us until they've broken down their social conditioning.

That only leaves women who were badly conditioned, like me, and most of them will probably find the women's movement more immediately attractive than Libertarian groups. The smallness of the Libertarian movement militates against it being even heard of by most women in this position. Also because their rebellion is initially against their conditioning and not the society that produced it. But again this should not be used as an excuse.

The Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) has declined in the last couple of years. Where do women go when they've 'raised their consciousness' to a level beyond that which the constraints on that movement allow?

A large proportion, we may assume, never succeed in making the connection between their conditioning and the organisation of society, and believe themselves equal and liberated on achieving the editorship of the women's page in the 'Mirror' etc.

Many fall into the hands of the 57 varieties of Trotskyists, who were not slow to jump on the Women's Lib bandwagon. They have successfully created an illusion of interest by forming women's caucuses both within WLM and their own organisations. These women are easily 'brainwashed' — thanks to their social conditioning — to get their priorities right, in which the 'industrial worker' comes at the top (at least they seem to accept the situation as it exists, as decreed by the leadership) against which all other social inequalities pale into insignificance.

Thus 'Women's Voice' is a pale imitation of 'Socialist Worker', printing news about women industrial workers. While 'Socialist Worker' is THE paper of the 'International Socialist' organisation, it being implicit that 'worker' is 'man'.

Many women who first went into the WLM were from 'left' organisations and joined WLM on the rebound. It was these women who were most receptive to radical-feminism, because they saw that the authoritarian patriarchal family was not a capitalist invention, but existed in past societies: feudalism, slavery and, despite what Engels believed, probably in primitive society also. Why therefore should socialism be any different, especially as so called 'socialists' themselves support and reinforce both the nuclear family and sexist attitudes within their own lives and in their political organisations?

We know they mean 'state capitalism' and not socialism. We believe the means help determine the end.

Apart from where they go, there is the problem of what the Libertarian movement has to offer them.

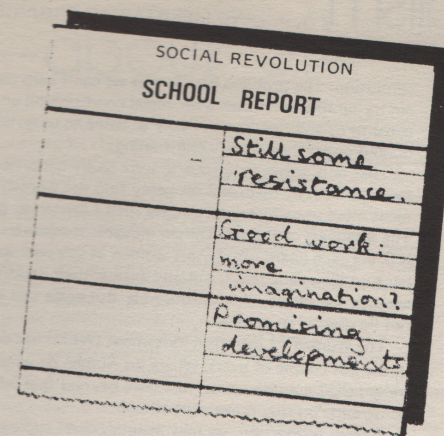
A predominantly male group is self-perpetuating. Most women would feel uncomfortable about going for the first time into a meeting room full of men that she's never seen before, alone. It takes a considerable amount more courage and enthusiasm for a woman to do this, than for a man.

For that reason she is more easily scared off, especially if she can't summon up that extra bit of courage to talk to her she will leave at the end. To hang around would just be embarrassing and she can't take a seat in the bar downstairs alone. So she goes and probably never comes back, her courage and enthusiasm slowly draining away.

There are of course women to whom being the only woman in an all-male group is the epitome of their tomboy

*continued on page 18*





# SCHOOL REPORT

## COMPREHENSIVES

Tameside has become the focus of the latest stage in the long battle over comprehensive education. In the press, and in public discussion generally, the affair has led to argument about the constitutional powers of Ministers, and the merits or otherwise of selection on the basis of reports rather than an 11-plus exam. In fact the only question the Lords, as the 'highest court in the land', were asked to consider was the reasonableness of the proposed selection on the basis of reports.

The Lords' verdict was delivered in record time, and they sat at a time of year when they are normally on holiday, and all this added to the drama of what everyone wanted us to see as democracy in action — a test-case for our legal and constitutional machinery.

The lessons we *should* be drawing from Tameside seem to me to be quite different. What kind of selection procedure children are put through is almost a detail: in fact the Lords' verdict could be seen as underlining what some of us have been feeling about selection procedures for a long time. The system has you sorted out well before the age of eleven, and almost anyone could sort out 'potential Grammar school material'. Or, if you can't tell how a child is going to 'turn out' (i.e. he/she has been moulded), it doesn't matter anyway and they can be sent wherever the authorities decide, as they will almost certainly have learnt not to complain, and to respect the decisions of those who know best. . .

In the public debate, these questions were avoided. Who asked about the effect of the mess-up and the retention of Grammar schools on those who do not get places? How often did we hear questions about the kind of education the kids of Tameside are getting, which ever system they end up with, and the relevance of their education to their future lives and happiness?

What really has been going on in Tameside shows through from time to time, behind some of the things said. For instance, at one point the chairman of the Education Committee said the next step was to 'stop the Labour Government's Education Bill'. Delusions of grandeur? Or was

the whole thing a battle between different power-groups, with the dice loaded in favour of the 'middle classes', and the children being kicked around in between? Certainly the Labour Party has been pushed into revealing the lack of real commitment to any educational ideals in its position; the Labour MP was actually saying he was angered when *not enough* children had been found for the Grammar places....

This is to me a classic picture of the way decisions are made in a capitalist society. The system is fundamentally class-ridden, but everyone tries to pretend it's fair. In Tameside, as throughout the country, worker is pitted against worker in the struggle for the few crumbs to be had. And all are under the illusion, because the crumbs are very few: only a very small section of even the Grammar-educated children will make it to the 'top' — and once there, I'm sure they will wonder what they fought so hard for.

I believe libertarians must take part in the fight for Comprehensive education — it is at least *some* improvement over the branding of kids for life as either 'Grammar' or 'Secondary Mod'. But of course we don't see this as the end of the road. There is a great deal that we can do, in the course

of fighting for real Comprehensive education, both to emphasise our basic criticisms of the education system under capitalism, and to explain how we see capitalist values and forms of organisation running through the schools and colleges. We have to support those who are pressing for greater equality in education — but stressing that we believe this to be impossible without total equality — socialism — in all aspects of life. We can support those who want to see education cater more for the needs of the individual — but pointing out that in capitalism it is not needs but profits that call the tune. We can support those who want more money spent on education, — but again emphasising that the order of priorities in this society is not determined by social need, so we will only get improvement in education when the system can afford it; and just at the moment we have international bankers to think of!

Similarly, we can support those who are opposed to the constant grading and marking in education — showing the links between this and competition, and how the education system spends a lot of its effort on producing people to fit pre-determined holes in society.

As I see it, there is nothing wrong with supporting reformist pressure groups, such as the pre-comprehensive lobby, because it provides opportunities to contact people who have started to think along the same lines as ourselves, and who only need to meet our arguments to encourage them to take their own positions further. Obviously, in working with non-libertarians we have to make it quite clear where we stand. I am totally opposed to the kind of manipulative use of movements such as the 'Right to Work' campaign, where, as I see it, people are encouraged to make impossible demands of the system, in order to show them that the system cannot give them what they want. We can join in the fight for comprehensives, *provided* we make it clear that our support is not unconditional, that we see each reform as only a small-scale change, and that we are concerned with promoting a particular kind of large-scale and fundamental change; and provided that we make it clear that we believe that only a socialist perspective can fully explain the need for the kind of changes we are fighting for, and the nature of the resistance we will meet.

*continued on page 5*



continued from page 4

## OCCUPATIONS

For two or three weeks during May and June this year, a hundred or more colleges up and down the country were occupied by students, in protest at the cuts being made in expenditure on education. This time the press used the tactic of ignoring the events — although all those involved would testify to the very impressive sense of solidarity, and the high degree of anger behind the demonstrations.

The occupations were carried out with considerable tactical skill. Although they started just before the exams, student support remained solid and exams went ahead without disruption. (Maybe it was a pity the exams were allowed to go ahead, but we've not yet reached the position of students in France in May '68, when the protest ran deeper, and was aimed at the system as a whole . . . maybe that day will come!

The main theme of the campaign was the rising unemployment of teachers, so most of the occupations took place in Colleges of Education, or in Education Departments in bigger Colleges; but attempts were made to broaden the aims. At NELP (North East London Poly), for instance, the issue of racism was tied in — as limits on the number of overseas students (either by quotas or higher fees) can be seen as part of the same move to cut down education in a time of 'financial stringency'. However, this argument did not always get across; even some lecturers at NELP — which has a high proportion of foreign students — argued that it would have been better to stick to the teachers' issue alone, as it was more sure of getting support. This was depressing, as the lecturers' union, NATFHE, has been campaigning on the cuts issue for some time, and one would have expected lecturers to have been more aware of the possibility of their own unemployment if overseas student numbers are cut back — quite apart from any more radical arguments!

One implication of this is surely that all those involved in the fight against cuts in education must look very closely at their publicity and propaganda methods. People not actively involved in the campaign still seem not to understand the connections between the different forms of cutback, or the place of the cuts in the economic situation as a whole. Considering the length of time the campaign has been going on, this is serious, and it would seem that a good deal more talking and arguing has to go on to get these points across.

On the positive side of the Occupations, though, there was the breadth and strength of support at grassroots level, the support from some staff, and the co-ordination that developed between different colleges. For example, London colleges in occupation had joint meetings, and it was as a result of these that the Director of NELP received a number of telegrams threatening to occupy his office if he did not withdraw the legal action he was threatening against students occupying the Barking precinct of NELP. He did not withdraw the injunctions, but the telegrams he received could have been a factor in persuading the authorities not to act immediately.

However, the way the campaign developed in relation to NELP can be used to show what were some of the key problems in this kind of struggle. For although there was a delay, in the end the authorities *were* prepared to call in the police: everyone not actually in occupation was advised to leave the precinct by the end of a certain day, and then an ominous atmosphere developed as the students waited. Exams due to be held on the precinct the next day were abruptly moved elsewhere — thus the only disruption of exams was as a result of the authorities taking legal action.

'Moderate' lecturers were considerably shocked that the Directorate were apparently prepared for a situation to develop in which their students were put in jail. It is to be

hoped that more people have now learned to what lengths the authorities are prepared to go, and how much power is on their side. Several student 'ringleaders' (i.e. officers of the Students' Union) are under threat of suspension as a result of their part in the occupation, and it remains to be seen whether anyone can get the suspensions withdrawn.

So, apart from these lessons, and the growth of rank and file solidarity, it is difficult to see what has been achieved. I think the most significant other gains were those which came *indirectly* from the occupations. Thus, those involved have gained a lot of practical knowledge about how to start and keep an occupation going, and it is to be hoped that this knowledge is shared out! In addition, some useful information was gleaned from files in occupied offices — a practical contribution to the 'open the books campaign'!

Another useful spin-off was the 'flying' occupation, which individual bureaucrats found when they sat back and relaxed after the occupation was apparently over! The element of surprise was perfect, and I hope will be used in the promised occupations next term.

I hope, too that rank and file students and lecturers have gained a healthy distrust of their own union bureaucrats. . . This is suggested by the occupation that took place of NUS offices, when the NUS tried to call off the occupations.

The problems remain, of course, of finding ways of countering the power of College authorities, of putting the arguments across to non-activists and others, and of making any impact on the Government. I think part of an answer to all this lies in finding more imaginative forms of demonstration — and this also implies recognising that this is the main role of occupations at present: apart from their value as practise-runs for the time when we start the Final Occupation of all our work-places, they are simply a way of demonstrating strength of feeling, and thus trying to pressurise the authorities. In this, unfortunately, they were not very successful, and this is where the main problem lies.

The other important answer lies in learning not to be led into thinking that we can change education on its own, or on our own. The government's attack on education, we must repeat, is part of a broad capitalist crisis, and must be seen as such, and fought as such, by the broad mass of the victims of capitalism. This means strengthening the solidarity that is developing among those involved in different aspects of education, reaching out from education to other public sector workers and consumers, and finally enlisting the support of all workers in the fight against the system as a whole.

## LIBERTARIAN STUDENTS NETWORK

A welcome move in the development of a libertarian presence in education is the setting up of a Libertarian Students' Network. At the time of writing, a founding conference has been held, a newsletter is planned for late August, and another conference planned for 12th/14th November, at Bradford University. Discussion so far has produced agreement on a number of organisational and theoretical guidelines, with which we would agree, in particular: 1) the need to involve the whole the whole of the libertarian left, and all those involved in the whole gamut of the educational process who are sympathetic to the aims and principles of the LSN;

2) the aim of working within existing organisations such as the NUS, not setting up a separate, elitist body, but working for democratic control of the NUS by the student body;

3) the necessity of adopting a specific class line and relating the struggle in education to the general struggle against capitalism;

4) the need to mobilise on specific issues and campaign collectively, as well as co-ordinate local initiatives;

continued on page 7



RECENTLY I travelled 7,500 miles across Russia, from the port of Nahodka in the Siberian Far East to European Russia in the west of the country.

The whole of this journey was by railway and I stopped off to rest up for a few days at a time at a number of towns on my route, such as Irkutsk in Siberia, Moscow and Leningrad.

#### Struggle with China

The trans-Siberian railway runs north-west from Vladivostok on Siberia's eastern seaboard but 'foreigners' such as myself have to board their trains at the civilian port of Nahodka further up the coast, since Vladivostok is a major naval base and therefore out of bounds to all 'non-Russians'

#### "Yellow peril"

The government encourages anti-Chinese feelings among the population (a man from Sverdlovsk in the Ural Mountains whom I got into conversation with talked at some length about the "yellow peril") and at times seems to be the victim of its own paranoia in this respect.

For example, I remember that at one place several hundred miles from the border with China there were still sentries with fixed bayonets to be seen, guarding timber yards alongside the railway.

Presumably the sentries were there to guard against a possible surprise attack by the Chinese army, although the thought did hopefully flicker across my mind that it might have been working class sabotage that had prompted their posting.

#### Bad service for workers

Since there is no airport at Nahodka, all tourists who come into Russia from the East have to travel 16 hours by train as far as Khabarovsk.

#### SOCIAL REVOLUTION 6

The trains between Nahodka and Khabarovsk are therefore something of a showpiece but at Khabarovsk nearly all the tourists leave the railway to join flights taking them westwards.

Needless to say, the ordinary Russian workers and peasants who use the trains once Khabarovsk has been passed are not considered as important as tourists with hard currencies to spend, so that from Khabarovsk onwards the train service suddenly deteriorates.

#### Classes

Still, one has to be thankful for small mercies. The second class carriage that I was travelling in might have been dirty, but there are degrees of dirtiness as with all other things.

The third class carriages actually stank and people were jammed into them on endless rows of bunks, instead of being in compartments for groups of four people as we were.

But then, we reflected, you only get what you pay for in capitalist Russia, the same as you do in capitalist anywhere else.

#### Poverty

In many ways, a journey through Russia is like travelling back in time for someone coming from Britain. Poverty is a condition of working class life everywhere, but there are degrees of poverty as with dirt.

Travelling together with people for days at a stretch, one gets a good opportunity to see them in various stages of undress and most people were very poorly dressed indeed.

It really is no exaggeration to say that in general they are as shabby and as down at heel as workers were in Britain in the twenties and thirties.

Other things strike you too. Standards of hygiene, for example, are far behind what even avowedly capitalist governments enforce in the West.

On the eight day journey across Siberia to Moscow the train stops for a few minutes every four or five hours at tiny country stations along the way.

As the train pulls in, peasant women from the surrounding countryside are already waiting on the platform to sell to the passengers whatever they have produced on their private plots of land.

Generally it is a pretty limited selection — pickled cucumber, tomatoes, cold boiled potatoes, the occasional lump of cheese — but, whatever it is, it is

unfailingly wrapped up and handed over in a sheet of old newspaper.

You might say that wrapping things up in, and wiping one's bottom on, are all that *Pravda*, *Izvestia* and the rest of them are worth using for — but that is hardly the point.

Living like that again, it takes you back to the era when fish and chips too came wrapped in newspaper. Perhaps the Russian government justifies it as the defence of working class culture!

#### Brainless patter

During the periods when you are not actually travelling, the government tourist agency ('Intourist') attempts to take charge of you.

You stay in Intourist hotels and

Intourist guides like to take you around and show you the official sights to the accompaniment of the usual brainless patter about how many bricks it took to build Moscow University and so on.

#### Tipping

These Intourist hotels are interesting places. At the first one I stayed at in Irkutsk I tried an experiment and offered a few kopecks as a tip to the porter who helped me carry my luggage to my room.

There was no question of his being offended. On the contrary, he accepted it with alacrity.

Having tried it once, I did not bother again — and had to pay for it in terms of bad service from then on.

#### Workers not admitted

Take my experience at the Hotel Rossiya (Europe's largest hotel — perhaps the largest in the world, says the guide with pride) in Moscow for example.

First of all, I had difficulty even getting into the restaurant. The problem was that, being rather scruffily dressed, the head waiter took me for a Russian and told me that only those with special passes (basically this means Party/government officials, business men and interpreters) were allowed in.

I was supposed to take my working class custom elsewhere.

#### Tipping again

Having eventually pushed my way in, however, I sat down at a table with a couple of well-dressed Russians who had

## on a Russian journey



obviously had no difficulty at all in gaining entrance. The cut of their suits and their oily manners suggested that they were factory managers or something of the kind and when their meal was finished I noticed that the bill came to 8 roubles.

One of them fished out a 10 rouble note from his wallet and passed it to the waiter with a casual "Keep the change".

This had an immediate effect, the waiter promptly coming alive and bowing and scraping in all directions.

A few minutes later I finished my meal and called for the bill. I paid and waited for my 50 kopecks change. Nothing happened.

I caught the waiter's eye . . . and he smartly disappeared into the kitchens. There was nothing for it then but to make a scene.

By the time I had made enough commotion to have all eyes in the restaurant turned on me, the waiter came running and I got my 50 kopecks back, though with as much bad grace as he could summon.

I did not begrudge him the 50 kopecks. No doubt he was having the usual struggle to make ends meet on an

But his struggle to get by was no different from my own and, besides, giving handouts to one another is no way for workers to behave towards each other.

## Crossing the border

My final memory of Russia is back on a train again. The train limped along between black pine forests under a starless sky with drizzle coming down. This was the uninhabited belt of territory, cleared entirely of people, along the Russo-Finnish border.

Just short of the border the train wheezes to a halt at a prearranged point under burning arc lights and on come the troops.

In our carriages we have already been subjected to one search by customs officials, but this is the final going over.

(In Russia, that is. Once into Finland, the train will stop again and the whole pointless exercise will start once more. Not much sleep tonight.)

## Officers and other ranks

We wait our turn. Eventually the door opens and in they come. Two of them —

an officer and a soldier. You can tell the officer is an officer by the better quality of his uniform.

The officer examines our passports. It takes a minute or so and in the end he hands them back, apparently satisfied.

But there still remains the bed. Anything might be hidden under the bed. Machine guns, drugs, photographs of the tsar . . .

This is where the soldier comes in. The officer, being an officer, cannot be expected to handle anything heavier than a passport. It is the soldier who has to up-end the bed and peer beneath it while he continues to hold it up.

Much could be written at this point.

One could go on at length about the anti-socialist nature of customs posts and police officials, of national boundaries and armies.

But after being in Russia for several weeks it is the subtleties like this — the officer with his passport and the soldier with his bed — that one learns to appreciate.

John Crump

continued from page 5

# SCHOOL REPORT



5) the importance of autonomous local groups.

All these points indicate an approach which I share, as a member of a libertarian socialist group, and which I welcome as someone involved in education. This kind of development is badly needed: I am convinced that libertarian ideas are fairly widespread in education, and on the increase, but libertarians are very often isolated — usually unnecessarily, as they simply have no way of knowing that there is someone nearby with similar ideas. Whatever can be done to bring libertarians together is welcome, and I hope that anyone sympathetic to the LSN will contact the acting secretary:

Jerry Cantwell  
20a Buckland Crescent  
London NW3 5DX

Finally I would like to quote from the provisional aims of the LSN, as I think this is a good start to a definition of a

libertarian socialist position on education. I think such a position has yet to be worked out in detail, and I would welcome any comments, which we could publish in future issues of Social Revolution, which would contribute to such a definition. It is hoped to make articles on all aspects of education a regular feature in SR — so please send 'em in!

"... revolutionary educational change can obly be effected when linked to the wider struggles of the entire working class. The long-term objective must be a classless society which has common control of the means of production . . . the LSN is totally opposed to the competitive, elitist and hierarchical nature of the present educational system. Instead, it declares for a free non-discriminatory educational system, open to everyone at all levels, and under the direct control of all participants and workers within all educational institutions."

Ian Pirie.



We welcome letters from readers for publication, though we shall shorten them if necessary.

## LETTERS

Dear Comrades,

The article you published by John Crump in LCS is one of the most important critiques of the revolutionary movement I've read.

First, it said what many socialists already realise, that is, that everything is not a bed of roses and that we are not winning the fight as fast as many pretend. I believe it is good to come out into the open and say this, unlike the great majority of Trotskyists (IS, IMG etc), who if they do realise this fact, believe admitting it can only have a detrimental effect. They thus continue with the propaganda alleging that the movement is growing bigger all the time, thus they believe enticing more people to become converted to their particular brand of socialism.

Secondly, it analysed the very roots of our dilemma. That is, that the great majority of the working class do not think true socialism is a better alternative.

It seems to me that the main defect with socialist/revolutionary political discussion is that in the arguments brought forward the revolutionary concentrates on the negative, that is, criticism of capitalist society.

If the person agrees with the reasoning which explains the discrepancies of the market system, which our society is based upon, the usual response is "fair enough, but this social system is the best of the worst", indicating a preference for a "democratic" society or to be more precise a "non-authoritarian" society. The moment revolution or communism is mentioned or even inferred all the prejudices and fears "indoctrinated" into most people by the media emerge. That is, revolution is too fast, violent and disruptive and that communism can only exist when freedom is withdrawn and individuality suppressed. (The immediate analogy drawn is with the kind of society experienced under the totalitarianism of state capitalism, ie the mis-named communist countries of Russia and China).

If a left of centre viewpoint is taken, a reformist solution is offered, ie change in society is attempted in a slow, piecemeal fashion, which does not effect the very nature of our economic system which is the fundamental basis of present day society.

The most important and as yet unanswered question is how to achieve the new society. I believe the "pessimistic" John Crump may have hit the nail on the head. The crux of the problem is how to achieve popular support (absolutely essential for a true and secure revolution).

In addition to denouncing present day society we must explain what the socialist alternative could be like ie an end to wage labour, the perfect satisfaction of all our needs, produced by everyone giving according to their abilities, and the abolition of all inequalities. In short the best use of human talent and the world's resources for everyone. At the same time one must emphasise that the perfect society is not pre-determined, but will be designed dynamically and be created by everyone.

John Crump's perceptiveness is that of defining the defensive anti-capitalist nature of the majority of the world working classes struggles, and to achieve popular support for the world revolution socialist consciousness needs to be awakened in the large majority of the working class. How this is to be done has yet to be determined.

I invite suggestions about the means we should be using to re-educate the masses, bearing in mind the tight grip that the power elite has on the media and the education system.

ANDY FORD, Sheffield.

### READERS' MEETINGS

If you are interested in what we say and would like to meet us for discussion, please contact London group, who will be arranging readers' meetings for this purpose.

### AU PAIRS — AN INTERNATIONAL BUNKUM

The experience of the au pair association has shown from the beginning how weak its foundation was. To au pairs with problems it stood as the answer to their personal troubles. Greenshaw Evening Centre, for English language instruction, counted 20 supporters (teachers excluded) to the movement.

But we forgot to find out to what extent they supported it and went straight on. The point came when we had to put ourselves forward and commit ourselves. The association reached its climax when we produced the leaflet. As soon as we obtained some publicity and enquiries, the Greenshaw group fell to pieces — everyone hurried in confusion to get away from anything to do with the association.

In fact, there wasn't a single au pair left in it! I'm not sure what happened then, but it seems that the association has definitely been taken over by outsiders.

Now, apart from the fact that we are exploited by our employers, there is a basic ambiguity in the very definition of an au pair. The families which ask for au pairs do not expect a foreign girl they don't know to be their guest but their employee. The agencies cleverly use the word "guest" to conceal their real role — suppliers of cheap labour.

For there is no doubt that we are employees. Hiding behind the facade of more or less cultural organisations, free from State regulation because international, they draw in every year many young workers for the benefit of one privileged class.

Being an au pair has been for some people a perfect way to raise consciousness. Arriving from the Continent with ecstatic thoughts about the typical English family, their politeness and hospitality, duped by the agencies, the au pairs quickly realise what a swindle it is. The evening classes become the centre for exchanging complaints of those who are "unhappy with their families".

Discharging one's feeling of being fed-up doesn't change anything but it helps to keep up morale. "After all, the others are worse off, and I have only . . . months left to stagnate here."

The idea of the association attracted much sympathy and support, but when the au pairs went back to their families, it was hard facing the employers and keeping honest with oneself. We felt suddenly isolated.

When we talked about meetings outside class, we ran against the first barrier. How could we manage to gather people who have no fixed working hours (but we have fixed wages — ironically called pocket money, which entitles the employers to pay £6 a week), who hesitate to spend money on something which is not strictly necessary, and who are scattered all over the county of Surrey?

For me, the au pair association has been a double failure. The business has not been knocked down or even shaken. I received a letter from an agency manager who, extremely politely, cursed the association. He said there were some good agencies, and he himself was looking after his au pairs. He suggested I send him all the unhappy au pairs I was talking about and would place them. The second failure is that only a few girls have torn the veil and fought for the association with political awareness.

I thank very much some SR members and sympathisers for their advice and help. I hope we shall meet again in our struggles for socialism.

Fraternally, Evelyne Laveaux.



# AU PAIRS

## the union that never was

I'm not an au pair. In fact those men who do try to become au pairs find it almost impossible to get a place, though the agencies will still take their money. For a man to take on such a domestic role is felt by most as ridiculous, embarrassing, contemptible even — and that says something about the status of women.

Nevertheless, I and some other members of Social Revolution (London) have been involved in the attempt to set up an au pair union (or association, to make it sound more "moderate"). So my viewpoint may be of interest, and hopefully those of others will follow.

The idea of an au pair organisation came from someone from France, working as an au pair in the Surrey stockbroker belt. F (as I'll call her) had been involved in the school pupils' movement in France. She started thinking of a union some time after she had contacted us, when she and the other students at the local English language class commiserated on the way they were treated.

She asked her English teacher if she could talk to her class about the idea. The teacher held a debate on it, and "the class answered quite positively to the suggestions". She planned now to contact other au pairs by leafleting language classes, that being the main place where they get together.

I helped draft the leaflet from her notes, another member of SR helped duplicate it, and a third helped distribute it (zero response, as far as I know). As it gives an idea of what it all was about, we reproduce the leaflet here.

The contacts were other Surrey au pairs who seemed to be interested.

At the same time she contacted various papers: "The Guardian" published a short article, and so eventually did "Spare Rib". "Morning Star" told her she should first contact an existing union — presumably the International Branch of the T&GWU. "Time Out" had just published an article exposing abuses by agencies and families, and were prepared to publicise the association when the response could be coped with. F also had an interview at the BBC.

At this time F left for Scotland, after that to return to France. I agreed to try to get those interested together, though I didn't have the time or inclination to be very much involved over the long term. A number of people had got in touch from all the publicity — a manager and an ex-manager from au pair agencies, someone from the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, Intercoop (a cooperative of English language teachers). An assortment of busybodies from the libertarian left, like me, were also more or less interested. Everyone, except the au pairs.

There were a couple of meetings, and we decided to set up an Au Pair Advice Centre, so that au pairs could phone in for advice. There would be an effort to investigate and improve the legal situation, and to issue a press statement, lobby MP's, and other activity of a conventional reform type.

*continued on page 17*

### AU PAIRS — GUESTS OR SERVANTS?

The Home Office regulations state: "The relationship should be on the basis of social equality and not on a mistress-servant basis." BUT we are often treated as servants, not as members of the family. When I asked: "Why don't we talk more to practise my English?", I was told: "We are interested in your work, not your English accent."

The regulations limit work to 5 or 6 hours a day, BUT we must often work up to 10 hours a day.

### WE NEED TO ORGANISE TO FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS!

This leaflet is produced by a group of au pairs who plan to form an au pair association.

- \* to meet and help one another
- \* to fight for better pay and working conditions
- \* to defend and improve our legal rights
- \* to obtain better and cheaper instruction in the English language
- \* to help and inform au pairs arriving in this country
- \* to fight the abuses of the au pair agencies and to try to replace them
- \* to find British friends who can help us when necessary
- \* to arrange social and cultural events, cheap excursions etc.

Even if you happy with your situation, you have no guarantees.  
We hope you will join us. Contact:



## WORLD WIDE

## india road to reaction



In looking at the political situation in India, one must bear in mind the features which distinguish it from most other countries, even in the 'Third World'.

Firstly, its size. In terms of population and area, it is comparable to Europe as a whole. As a consequence, there are enormous differences between areas; at least 20 languages exist, most with different alphabets. At the same time, it has not in the past been centralised. Delhi only became the capital after the British found Calcutta too full of nationalists, and Bombay and Madras are potential centres of power. This poses difficulties in the way of political control.

Further, it is still a mainly rural country. Despite the enormous growth of the cities, especially Calcutta, at least 80% of the population live in villages. This is not so in Latin America for instance.

At Independence, British India broke up into India, Pakistan and Ceylon. Since then, India has been governed by the Congress party. This includes a very varied collection of tendencies, but officially espoused nationalism and 'socialism'.

In the late sixties, severe strains began to develop under the impact of the beginning economic crisis, and particularly the failure of the so-called 'green revolution', which used new varieties of cereals to try to increase output. These strains led to the development of opposition groups, such as the Tamil nationalist DMK in the Southern state of Tamil Nadu. The congress party split, with Mrs. Gandhi (the daughter of Nehru and not related to the religious leader) getting control.

Her Congress (Ruling) won an election in 1971 and continued to rule, with the help of the "Communist" Party of India (the pro-Moscow one). The campaign was fought on a left-wing platform, particularly 'abolish poverty'. Basically, the idea was to unite the masses with the industrial bourgeoisie and especially the large bureaucracy against the more traditional rulers, represented by the Congress (Opposition) and other groups. For instance, the government removed some of the remaining privileges of the Princes.

Of course, this alliance did not last long. The new bosses preferred an

alliance with the old ones, and the Congress (R AND O) relied heavily on landlords and others and local level. For instance, it was decided that a certain number of candidates should be from the bottom 'untouchable' caste. But they turned out to be those few who owned businesses.

At the same time the existence of an important bureaucratic segment was hardly recognised, let alone thought worth attacking. But in fact they have an important influence politically. Any job with a degree of privilege (and particularly the Civil Service) becomes the monopoly of an educated group, who are of course primarily the children of the wealthy. In some parts, a degree is necessary to become a bus conductor.



Naturally, this group does not see itself as privileged. It supports "socialism" on the following argument: "socialism" = nationalism and bureaucracy = more jobs for us. It was this attitude which enabled a Government minister to say, after Bangladesh broke away from Pakistan in 1971 "Bangladesh has a secure socialist future, because it is firmly based on the middle class".

continued on page 13

An active organisation carrying out the social revolution, the "70s Front" is naturally ready to confront many questions, such as: What are your beliefs and ideals? How do you see the future Hong Kong revolution? And so on.

Such questions are, honestly, hard to answer, but nonetheless demand thorough analysis, lest our action come to lose all its vitality, our words and deeds become rootless and our blindness laughable. The below can be said to be our first, tentative attitudes toward the above questions.

## OUR IDEALS

In certain cases people ordinarily say: "I'm an xxx-ist". Likewise, we are often asked, "What ism are you?" Questions such as these put us in a predicament — which doesn't mean that we've no ideal nor beliefs, only that we've yet to come upon the perfect banner representing our thoughts.

Those whose heads hanker after worn-out ways, treading the straight and narrow of rigid self-restraint; who, without a shred of principle, take the teachings of the prophets and priests and call them their own ideas — they represent the flight from freedom. The aim of revolution is to change society, not to register the correctness of this or that ism. With an open attitude, we therefore recognize, criticize and welcome all progressive thought. Any "pure xxx-ism" is absolutely meaningless.

So, to answer the questions above, usually all we can say is: "We are socialists." Socialism is a tied in which we find many currents, some of them mutually opposed. Those who insist on classifying the ultimate aim of socialism according to two distinct higher and lower stages, communist and socialist, bring up the "transition question", a theoretical basis advanced so as to perpetuate the state machine, oppress the people, and secure the advantage of a small elite after the elimination of capitalism.

In general, socialist currents and sects share one point: they all favor the abolition of private ownership and the return of production capital to the public ownership of society. They seek to remake society on an egalitarian base so as



# THE SAME CLASS STRUGGLE

## china cultural revolution or social revolution ?

to establish an ideal society which meets people's needs. Since we too share these concepts, we too call ourselves "socialists".

But compared to all the other socialist strands, we especially stress the humanist spirit to be found in socialism. As Marx stressed in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, if communism lacks humanism then it isn't communism, and humanism lacking communism isn't humanism. One who seeks complete independence and freedom can only exist in a society both rational and prosperous. And a rational and prosperous society's existence, in turn, depends on whether

This is part of a statement issued by the Seventies Front in Hong Kong, which we are reprinting from the magazine "Libero International" ("The Seventies" is a working class district of Hong Kong.) The group consists of both Hong Kong Chinese and libertarian refugees who left China at the end of the "Cultural Revolution", when the "extreme democratic faction" was being suppressed. Their address is 158 Shaukiwan Rd., Hong Kong.

On the whole we agree with the views in this statement. The main weakness is that it still sees problems in national terms, as if a successful social revolution could be achieved in China in isolation from the rest of the world.

the individual character is to fully develop.....

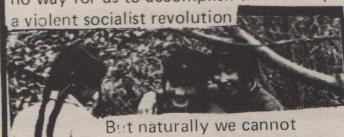
The most revolutionary aspect of a revolution lies precisely in his/her independence and freedom. Come the day our individuality is wiped out, we're robbed of our freedom, and all is done at the direction of a solitary authority, leader or party, then we'll have reached the ideal society — if this isn't the biggest joke the world has ever seen, then it has got to be the most beautiful!

We are resolutely against all authority: authority suggests suppression. And against all power, no matter its shape or

form. We affirm that, under freedom and equality, a socialist life is founded on mutual cooperation and free association.

But unlike the proverbial thief who covers his ears that the ringing of the bell he's stealing won't give him away, we don't deceive ourselves by denying the existence of the class struggle in the society before us. We are, however, resolutely against encouraging class hatred as the driving power of the revolution. Hatred will only bring in its wake retribution, suppression, stripping of the people's rights and the distortion of the people's humanity. . . .

Violence perpetuates the slavery and robbery of the masses — precisely this principle serves as the foundation of contemporary society. A violent socialist revolution is necessary, and if we are to radically transform society and construct in its place one of free workers, there is no way for us to accomplish this save by a violent socialist revolution



But naturally we cannot encourage and sing the praises of violence. Rather than saying violence inevitably and logically proceeds from revolution, better to say that we are forced to resort to violence because, in order to secure their own profits, the anti-revolutionists suppress us with violence.

. . . In the last analysis is the Chinese social structure under the communist regime socialism? This, more than all else, calls for urgent analysis.

First the economic side. The Chinese communists are struck as ever in the rut of capitalism . . . . The economic system under the Chinese communists is simply one where the capital resources have been rationalized, domestic markets brought under state control and nationally operated ventures come to replace private ones.

But nationalizing production resources has little to do with socializing production resources, and even less to do with realizing a socialist economy . . . . In China, nationalizing production resources means only that the state has become the general capitalist; and its control powers are all

concentrated in the hands of a small clique of party bureaucrats. Thus have the party bureaucrats, in turn, metamorphosed to where they've taken "protective custody" of productive resources.

As ever before, the industrial workers are wage labor, people plundered and repressed. Having failed to eliminate



capitalism, the Chinese communists have driven the capitalist system to the extreme . . . . Not only do wages not reflect the value of labor itself, but are low compared to other capitalist countries. Not only are wages not subject to supply and demand, likewise neither is return on investment regulated, so that the push for attainment of the greatest scale of return on investment has been rendered into the guideline of the People's Economic Plan.

This kind of policy is reflected in the universal low wages and shortage of consumer goods, and is reflected all the more in the flow of goods from the mainland to Hong Kong. The application of political force to the suppression of labor, to the increase in expropriation of value, and to the exalting of the return on investment rate all leave any traditional capitalist system trailing far behind in a cloud of dust . . . .

The socialist economy we seek:

1) is not the nationalization but the socialization of production resources. In

*continued on page 12*



# china

continued from page 11

areas of production control, all responsibility for coordination and control will lie with Workers' Committees, comprising representatives chosen by the workers. As for the form of production, the division-of-labor system will be abolished — including the division between industrial and agricultural labor, between mental and physical labor, between that of managers and producers, and between



dissimilar production processes, thereby ensuring that every last worker becomes the embodiment of creative power;

- 2) abolishes the wage labor system;
- 3) determines social production according to mass consumption, and plans an economy where need determines income.

As for the political aspect in China, the party directs everything, and the Chinese Communist Party has been influenced by the foul weed of the Leninist vanguard party organized as a high-level, concentrated formation, founded on the principle of "democratic centralism". Theoretically, policy formulation involves a democratic-style discussion by standing party members or their proxies, thereafter to be collectivized and implemented. And should there be an opposing view, once the matter is put to a vote, the majority will must be obeyed absolutely.

On the surface this appears both democratic and collective; actual circumstances are quite the contrary. In this case ample democracy means nothing more than the opportunity for those attending the meeting to understand opposing views. But it does not necessarily follow that this will solve the problems, because a policy's correctness can only be tested in the crucible of actual implementation.

Under centralism, minority opinions lose all chance of being tried and tested, and naturally which way is right cannot

be determined. Therefore, when events reveal majority decisions and consequent policy to have been in error, the people must go on believing that that was the only way. As far as those who hold democratic centralism sacred are concerned, to allow any chance of implementation to dissimilar ideas or policies represents the path of adventurism or the stupid dissipation of 'actual energies.'

But we'd like to point out that the opinion of the majority is not necessarily the correct one. If it is majority opinion that serves as the refuge for all policies, is not this too a kind of adventurism? Rather, wouldn't it be far safer to allow different policies a chance at experimentation and actualization, so as to provide mutually complementary, supportive policies?

And as for the line that this would mean a dissipation of actual energies, there's even less of a leg to stand on. For the concrete expression of actualized energies is to be found in the efficient application of all resources, and the quick — and accurate — attaining of projected targets.

Democratic centralization suffers from one serious defect: it becomes a warm bed to bureaucrats. This is the result of high-level centralization of power as well as information and materials.

Consider the case of an ordinary party member: though s/he is legally entitled to criticize and review the policies of his/her superiors, yet, unable to obtain the relevant data, how is s/he to conduct a vigorous criticism, an effective review? In such cases where decisions flow top-down and not bottom-up, the slow development of absolute submissiveness to one's superiors is the result . . . .

"Without the efforts of the Chinese Communist Party, without CCP members serving as the mainstream pillars of the people, the independence and liberation of China would have been impossible, as would the industrialization of China and the modernization of its agriculture." — Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. III, "On Coalition Government". This passage fully reflects a reactionary toward the interests of the revolution, the masses, and the party, etc.

And it is with just such attitudes that a small group of bureaucrats, regarding the advantage of the party as that of the revolution, see their own interests and theirs only as the interests of the party. And whenever they meet opponents of different mind, they immediately attack them as "counter-revolutionaries" or a "conspiracy party". Under the pretext of dictatorship of the proletariat, gradually all become subject to a progressively unscrupulous repression.

Not only is this true for extra-party affairs, but also within the party too — as demonstrated in the reactionary line, "No party outside the party, no faction within the party." If such a dictatorship is meant to protect the fruits of the revolution, and to bring the passage to communism, then it amounts to the most colossal absurdity.

We must understand that dictatorship is only meant to maintain the special class interests of the ruling class, and the proletariat hasn't its own class property interests. So there's no such thing as a so-called class dictatorship. The entire process of stripping the bourgeoisie of all its capital should be a revolution involving the whole of humanity. To set up, at any point in this process, a controlling party dictatorship under the fine-sounding name of "dictatorship of the proletariat" is simply a dirty insult to, and shameful deceit of, the proletariat.

No matter whose hands hold the reins of the state, the result is still suppression of the people. In a nutshell, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely".



Therefore we resolutely oppose the vanguard party concept, instead advocating a myriad of mass organizations, each producing its own ideas and policies. At the same time this assures a consciousness-raising struggle of the people on the people on the broadest possible scale. The consciousness of the people is the main condition for the fruition of the true socialist revolution. A revolution directed by a party or a few "heroes" cannot possibly be a revolution liberating humankind.

Simultaneously, we oppose using the pretext of dictatorship of the proletariat to strengthen the instrument of the state. Simply put, we oppose all dictatorships, all governments, all forms of statism, and all authority. We stand for endlessly-evolving freedom, for we sense, intuitively, that individual freedom is the prior condition for the freedom of all, and that once the individual is robbed of his/her freedom, freedom for all cannot possibly exist. Likewise, when the collective good ignores or suppresses individual interest, that spells the end of the collective good.



## WHERE IS CHINA GOING?

In China, the true meaning of socialism has been distorted and corrupted. A cruel, relentless dictatorship, ubiquitous security agents, the impersonal concepts of the murky religion of "socialism"... made people feel dark and secretive.

Just when all hope was lost, the "Great Cultural Revolution" burst forth in a shower of sparks, penetrating the darkness with a gleaming light, illuminating for China the road ahead, whereon performed those socialist fighters who, for the sake of truth would not submit, but would fight back, struggle, and ultimately seize the victory.

The Great Cultural Revolution, beginning with a top-to-bottom false revolution, was transformed into a bottom-to-top genuine revolution. The masses would never again be made fools of, never again let themselves be led by the nose into bringing down those designated as the so-called class enemy...

On their own, they organized and took control, and they discovered that even without the bureaucrats and supreme directives, their factories could maintain and even increase production. And they found that their lives were fuller than ever before, the gap between people closed. In order to thoroughly smash the bureaucratic structure — the "revolutionary committees" — mass revolutionary organizations appeared.

This spontaneous mass movement was diametrically opposed to the religious socialism of Mao Tse-tung; the authority of the "pope" lost some of its glamour. Repression failed time and again, ideology momentarily came to life, and for the

first time the people came into contact with the tide of true socialism. One by one, groups representing the vanguard of the masses, who had come to a socialist awareness began to emerge in the ranks of the ultra-left. Their growth heralded the death of Mao Tse-tung Thought.

The fear-stricken bureaucrats shed their masks, revealing their ferocious features, and mobilized the state apparatus to lord it over the people. Then the military fired its guns, and the revolutionary generation became a generation ground underfoot. The revolution died. Long live the revolution! The flesh may disappear, but the idea will stand strong in the face of armed repression.

The ultra-left factions of the Great Cultural Revolution symbolized the dawn of the Chinese revolution, but we must point out that, though they consciously opposed the bureaucrats and though they sincerely struggled for socialism, yet over 20 years of authoritarian control has forged an authoritarian character in a great majority of the people. Hence, even within the ranks of the ultra-left, not a few of the anti-bureaucrat fighters still sub-consciously fashioned themselves after their rulers.

This is history's tragedy, the poisoned legacy of the Mao Tse-tung dictatorship — and will become a great obstacle to the coming revolution. To mitigate this disaster, it is precisely here that we revolutionaries overseas who, taking advantage of our relatively free contacts with all the new trends in revolutionary thought throughout the world, should apply our energy.

Of the left opposition, we may distinguish 3 groups. Firstly the left. In addition to the "Communist" Party mentioned above, there is a CPI (Marxist), and a few smaller ones. These groups are not only Stalinist to the hilt (there seem to be few Trotskyists today), but engage in alliances with the right wing groups. Also, the Maoists suffer from the unpopularity of China. The arguments between them have caused splits in Britain, e.g. in anti-racist action.

The movement led by Bhavé and J.P. Narayan has gained some support among pacifists in Britain. A mass movement against corruption was the immediate cause of the emergency. However, it entered into an alliance with the right wing, who are just as corrupt when in power, and seems to have died a deserved death now.

## REPRESSION

Severe repression is nothing new to the Indian masses. Those who agitate among villagers are likely to be killed, or arrested

## CONCLUSION

The future of the Chinese revolution is tied up with the question of whether or not the ultra-leftists can spark off an all-encompassing socialist revolution; and that for Hong Kong with its success or failure. This does not mean that we in Hong Kong must wait by the stump for the hare\* in anticipation of the arrival of the Chinese revolution.

On the contrary, we must fight to oppose all irrational systems and let the mass movement in Hong Kong serve as catalyst for the Chinese revolution. To prevent the Hong Kong mass movement from falling into the ruts of the toppled cart of Kronstadt, the Chinese revolution remains the only effective assurance.

\* an old Chinese proverb which refers to the story of the man who, having seen a hare go down its hole, decided to sit down at a stump nearby and wait for it to come out again; the saying means to wait in vain, or to passively wait instead of taking constructive action.

## OUT SOON !

"The Enslavement of the Working Class in China" by Dirk Wouters.

A new pamphlet from SOCIAL REVOLUTION (London) exposing State Capitalism in China. Includes revealing documents of the cultural revolution not previously published outside China. 25p.

as 'Naxalites'. The Naxalites, or Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), carried out some acts of terrorism in West Bengal and elsewhere. However, many of those arrested were never shown to have done so. They were kept in prison for periods of several years without being brought to trial, and in some cases were tortured or killed.

In early 1974 a rail strike was broken by the arrest of 20,000 workers and the use of troops. Thus the working class probably noticed little when open dictatorship was introduced in June 1975.

The first acts were to attack the rights of the press, and to lock up large numbers of political activists — initially right wing Parliamentarians but later all left opposition. Strikes are banned — with the blessing of the TUC. The DMK government of Tamil Nadu was suspended when it refused to support the emergency.

According to David Selbourne who visited India recently, a British Leyland factory in Madras has a police station in the works. Gangs go around beating up known militants, and threatening their families. Despite this, workers are still finding ways to resist, just as they do in Chile.

continued from page 10

## india

Nationalist and separatist groups will probably prove more of a problem especially in the South. The regime may increase centralisation to deal with them. But they are likely to focus discontent for some time. If they were successful, they would of course attack workers just as much as the current regime.

Whilst the workers will continue to struggle, in the current situation there seems to be little chance of socialist awareness developing for some time. Part of the responsibility for this rests upon those who have put forward socialism as meaning more bureaucracy.

At the same time one must recognise that most of the population are in the countryside, and that most of them are not petty-bourgeoisie or middle-class but agricultural workers (even if unemployed). Movements based solely on the towns are doomed to failure.



# CACTL

## CONFERENCE ON DIRECT ACTION AND CRIMINAL TRESPASS

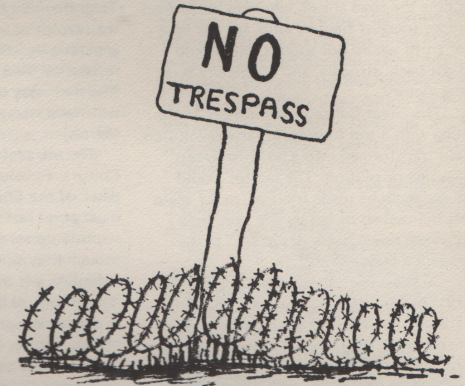
On Saturday 27th—Sunday 28th November the Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law (CACTL) is convening at Reading University, which provides a unique opportunity for activists in all fields of direct and autonomous action to exchange ideas, experience and information, and in so doing overcome the divisions created by the misconceptions and artificial images — those of “trade unionist”, “squatter”, “tenant”, “student” etc. — promoted by politicians and the media.

Basically the proposed programme for Saturday consists of two sessions of workshops in which discussion will be initiated by people who have direct experience of the struggle or type of struggle being examined.

Proposed workshops will be on Green Bans in New South Wales and Birmingham (and trade union and community joint direct action in general), direct action in Italy, industrial occupations, squatting, rent strikes, student occupations, direct action on the cuts, glossers, single homeless and gypsies, mass trespass, State response to direct action.

Each workshop will run in each session so that the various groups at the conference don't only go to workshops that deal with their own areas of action. Films and exhibitions dealing with the history of direct action will be shown throughout the conference.

The conference will be opened and the sessions divided by plenary sessions that will give information on the proposed criminal trespass bill; discuss ways of carrying the campaign against the bill forward; place the proposals in the context of the State's response to direct action, and show how the ground has been prepared for their introduction, by media distortion of squatting and rank-and-file trade union activity; and to examine the general history, effectiveness and potential of direct actions.



The final day will include a summary of the first day with report-backs from the workshops; discussion of the political use of the law, and regional meetings organised around existing CACTL groups.

These proposals are provisional. Offers of help, suggestions and criticisms to CACTL, c/o 6 Bowden St., London SE 11. (01-289 3877). Admission will be by ticket (£2), accommodation provided — the conference will be open, but labour movement (?) bodies will be encouraged to send delegates.

## Publications

### Available at last

Anton Pannekoek's  
"WORKERS COUNCILS"  
the classic of Council communism.

Send 60p + 15p postage to Box 217,  
142 Drummond St, London NW1.

**LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM 10.** Out now. Includes articles on IRELAND, BWNIC AND TOM, an editorial from COMBATE, STATISTICS IN A SOCIALIST SOCIETY and more. 22p including postage.  
Also available are a few copies of LC 8 and 9. 16p each, inc p&p.

We now have an account at the Co-op Bank.  
Please make all cheques and postal orders payable to "Social Revolution".

**MARX'S EARLY WRITINGS** — is a short duplicated pamphlet, a good introduction to Marx's early work. 10p including postage.

**LIBERTARIAN WOMENS NETWORK** — Newsletter now available for 50p sub from Alison Malet, 1 Lynwood Place, Dundee, Scotland.

**PHILADELPHIA SOLIDARITY** — libertarian socialist publication from America, available from London SR group, 18p including postage.

A modest proposal for **HOW THE BAD OLD DAYS WILL END.**  
Copies of this article from Charles Lutwidge in California, whose views on revolution and the new society we share, are available from us free.  
Send a stamp.



The main effect was to radicalise whole sectors of workers and convert even the leaders of unions into militants (for a time). Trade Union legislation was opposed by a major official stoppage on Mayday 1973, and by the successful defence of the jailed dockers. Incomes policy was smashed twice by the miners, and the degree of public support was obvious — in '74 even 'The Lancet', the major medical journal, supported them.

This time the government was smashed as well. So the incoming Labour Government tried new tactics.

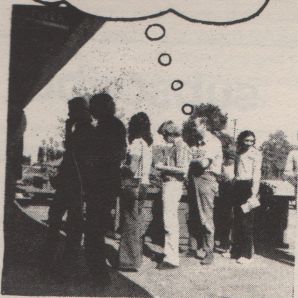
## THE INCORPORATION OF THE TUC

For a few months there was little control of the working-class by the new Government. Industrial militancy spread to new sectors, particularly the NHS. Here even the 'professional bodies' were driven into action, however limited, and the traditional low pay was substantially raised.

Soon, however, the needs of British capital asserted themselves. By the summer of 74 the first 'Social Contract' had been produced by negotiation between the Government and the TUC. This was fairly flexible, to avoid any conflict from a still militant working class, and was frequently criticised for this reason by commentators.

The method of obtaining agreement was to say to union leaders "The financiers are forcing it on us, and if you don't accept, we'll have a general election and get the nasty Tories back". The first part of this statement is true. The financiers are the embodiment of world capital, whose crisis demands an attack on the workers. The Labour Government is forced to surrender, and cannot explain the situation in Socialist terms (because they are not Socialists).

Sometimes it seems like the only difference between my work time and my free time is that during my "free time" I don't get paid for the work ...



So they fall back on garbage about the 'national interest' and the TUC accept it. The Labour left and the "Communist" Party also see the issue in national terms, and propose to solve it by isolating Britain from world capitalism. This is of course impossible — Britain has always been an integral part of global capitalism, and indeed largely created it. The only effect of this propaganda can be to help the real nationalist tendencies, such as the National Front.

As one part of the 'contract' was accepted, a stricter part was prepared. 6% and now 4½% increases when inflation is still well over 10%, massive expenditure cuts which will increase unemployment further, have been accepted with little protest. Whilst the actions of the working-class can surprise all 'experts', one can see today little serious opposition.

Only in Scotland has there been much resistance — 30,000 workers struck and marched through Dundee in a protest against cuts — and here it may be diverted into the SNP.

The incorporation of the TUC has meant that the union structures have taken over some of the functions of the State — a fact deplored by Constitutional purists. This means, for instance, that considerable powers over redundancy have been given to unions, in the Employment Protection Bill and elsewhere. For instance, in a closed shop a worker sacked at the request of a union loses all rights of appeal and redundancy pay etc.

This is not something irrelevant to the social contract, nor is it merely a sop to keep workers quiet. It is an integral part of the strategy. If the unions are to become the mechanisms of control of the working-class, they must be given the power to do the job properly. Although workers may in many cases benefit from these laws, we must see them in context. The only way workers can protect employment is by mass action.

We are used to seeing closed shops used against workers who commit such dire offences as talking to members of other branches or having black skins, but soon they will be used in this way much more. The struggle against the closed shop (which is not the same as shopfloor workers deciding who should work) is now an important issue.

## BUREAUCRATIC CONTROL

This situation has made it necessary for unions to improve their methods for suppressing opposition. One instance of this is the new rule on proscribed groups (rule 14) in the rules of Trades Councils. This prohibits association with any organisation opposed to TUC policy, and replaces a rule proscribing "Communist (ie. Communist Party oriented and Fascist groups". Trades councils (local bodies representing all unions) which do not accept it are not recognised.

This rule has 2 purposes. Firstly, it permits action against ad-hoc groups, and organisations like the International Socialists, which were not covered by the old rule.

Secondly, it marks the end of the old period of antagonism between the TUC and the CPGB. The Party is now recognised as being a loyal part of the apparatus. Indeed, in many cases it leads the manipulation of the bureaucracy. This is so in the National Union of Teachers for instance.

The case of Oxford Trades Council shows this alliance in action. After a long battle between the CPGB and the Trotskyist 'Workers Socialist League' for control, the CP and its friends organised a meeting to which others were not invited to alter rules, and then walked out of the AGM. After this they appealed to the TUC, who withdrew recognition and are trying to set up a new Trades Council.

This affair shows us the bankruptcy of the Trots. Also, because of their bureaucratic outlook, they can only oppose the TUC by more manoeuvres, and when these fail they can only resort to hysteria. For instance, instead of trying to win over uncommitted activists, they lump them all together as 'bureaucrats' and then behave in a manner whose only effect can be to alienate such people.

## THE FUTURE LIES AHEAD

The situation at the moment looks unpromising, with little resistance to the Government policy and more and more workers looking to right-wing solutions. However, on closer examination one can see many possibilities for future developments. The left has shown itself already to be totally bankrupt.

Unlike in the '20s and '30s, there are no major groups such as the CPGB who can pretend to be revolutionary and so divert workers. It is unlikely that the time is right for a



right-wing solution. The activity of Fascist groups will probably decline in the face of resistance from immigrant workers.

In this gap there is a good chance of genuine socialist ideas gaining ground. The main task for those of us who seek to help this is to clarify and propagate our ideas, and to make sure that we are separate in the eyes of the workers from the various groups of the state-capitalist, Leninist left. In practice this is probably the most difficult problem.

Phil McShane.

## au pairs continued from page 9

This sort of work is not completely futile and may help some people, but it does not promote basic social change. This is because it continues the relationship of patronage in which au pairs are already, even if a more benevolent kind. Those with more resources or experience do things *for* others, making the decisions, whereas in the long run people can only liberate themselves by their own efforts. This is why some of us felt we should no longer be involved.

However, it is possible that some of the au pairs who get involved in the Advice Centre will want a different kind of organisation, more under the control of au pairs themselves, using available help as needed.

What happened to the original group of au pairs in Surrey? Some of us tried to find out. One of them had been visited by journalists from an evening paper — against her will, but the family did not believe that — and got into trouble with the family, and also her agency. Nor did the others want to know anything about it — their enthusiasm had evaporated, or perhaps was never really there.

Of course au pairs are in an extremely weak position to do much themselves — isolated, inexperienced, very transient, with poor English and from many different countries. They depend completely on the family with whom they stay, who can throw them out at any time without any money. The "personal" nature of their position makes it embarrassing to protest — "you feel like a child" as one commented.

These are all aggravating problems, but I think that the main problem is the same for au pairs as for most other groups who are less weak. That is, that most people have been socialised to lack the initiative, self-confidence and awareness to organise, to fight back, let alone to make a revolution. On the whole, the more oppressed a group is, the more they lack these abilities, and the more likely their activity is to be taken over by those who do have them to some degree.

This is no-one's fault — to attack the one side as apathetic and deserving what they get, or the other as manipulative and elitist, are equally half-truths and equally beside the point. We shall overcome this somehow or otherwise get nowhere.

Au pairs find themselves in the no-woman's land between being employees and being "guests". Officially they are "guests" — in an unpaid, except for some pocket money, "personal" position, in which exploitation is masked by the claim of intimacy. This position is modelled on that of women as housewives: women in sufficiently well-off families can sub-contract some of their duties to the au pair.

In reality, au pairs are often treated without any intimacy — eating separately or with the kids, not allowed to watch the TV and so on. That is, they become low paid workers living in.

They have to decide in which capacity they want to improve their conditions — whether to regularise their position as workers, or to demand more generous treatment as "guests". The two aims may involve opposed strategies. Which type of oppression do you prefer?

I would like to finish with an appeal to those who call themselves revolutionaries — libertarian, "marxist" or feminist — to face the problems of getting people to struggle for their own liberation frankly in their literature. In left-wing anarchist and women's liberation papers, struggles are often described as autonomous and under the control of the people involved, when they are not or only partly so. This may be explicitly lying, or implied by what is not said — in the good old Civil Service tradition of "the truth, part of the truth and nothing but part of the truth".

This is so, for example of the article on au pairs in "Spare Rib", from which nobody would realise that what was being organised was an Advice Centre by non-au pairs. To what extent is this habit self-deception, and to what extent the manipulative deception of others?

Reading all the "militant" stuff produced by all the different groups, I'm sure plenty of people have the same reaction as me: "Ah, it's all happening — struggles here, struggles there, struggles struggles everywhere: Except here, where I am, and people grumble a bit but that's about it. Are we in the same world?"

The self-confidence which lies give us is illusory, and most people see through them. R-r-r-revolutionary militancy is one of the drugs which we might as well give up.

Stephan.

*continued from page 18*

This is even more apparent in the French language where all objects are divided into masculine and feminine articles. Though not so blatant in the English language it remains implicit to it.

Given the slump in the world's economy and the concomitant slump in the movements of the 'left' after the late 60's boom, we can't expect to make much headway at this time. The problem for Libertarian groups is the same for other 'left' groups who don't share our aims. As male membership grows so will the concentration on 'male' issues. It is not accidental then that women are always discussed in the same breath as sex and the family, while men are discussed in terms of work and politics.

We all agree that the revolution means more than just removing the capitalists' control over our work in favour of workers councils. — That's why these problems are so important, it's half our lives.

I haven't offered any solutions, I don't think I can. This is a social problem, though self-flagellation is not entirely ruled out, at least until we've all agreed that there is a problem and try to do something about it.

As I've covered a wide area in a short space, I hope that other people will take up the discussion. Sheila Ritchie.

Recommended — *'Anarchism — the Feminist Connection'* by Peggy Kornegger. Reprint available from Alison Malet 1 Lynnewood Place, Dundee. 5p + postage. Also available from Alison Malet: *Libertarian Women's Network Newsletter*.



## Problems of Socialism *continued from page 3*

fantasies, and who identify with the male ego — men have more intelligent conversations than women, who only want to talk about boyfriends. — They might not see the lack of women members as a problem at all, but rather feel other women would be a threat to their 'privileged' position.

Then there is a problem of the men themselves. Many men are afraid of approaching women for fear that they might be thought sexist. Or (un)consciously are you relieved when she doesn't come back? Some men (and women) feel much more comfortable with their own sex.

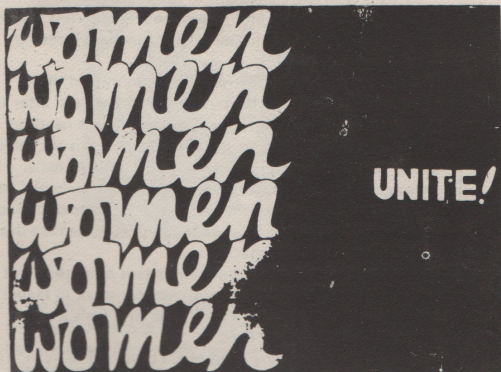
Then a group like SR expects a high level of consciousness and commitment from its members. Many women who are made to feel socially inadequate might feel they have nothing to offer. We must be careful not to put them off.

With only a few Libertarian-Communist women, we could not make much impression on the Women's Liberation Movement nor could we rush around the country making the occasional interested women feel at ease. Men will simply have to overcome their inhibitions. So will women.

### HOW FAR CAN WE GO WITH BREAKING DOWN OUR OWN ATTITUDES, FRUSTRATIONS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONING BEFORE REVOLUTION?

By making explicit exactly what we expect personally to gain from a new society. What sort of relationships do YOU want that are denied to you in capitalism? We say in our pamphlet *Introduction To Social Revolution* that only revolution can fully liberate us, but that we must try in our every day lives and our organisation to reflect as much as possible in capitalism, the sort of social relationships we would like to have after the revolution.

I think we fail. Firstly, we don't make our desires explicit in order to save us and others embarrassment, and because we are afraid of what our desires might lead to. Secondly, for men who live with women who aren't communists, there is a reluctance to upset the status quo. A reluctance — I may point out — that is not shared by women who 'raise their consciousness' through Women's Liberation.



Maybe we are afraid of freedom, afraid of the unknown in ourselves, and afraid of letting down too much of our character armour, leaving our inner-self revealed and vulnerable in a generally hostile world.

### WHAT CAN LIBERTARIANS DO TO HELP?

We want the sort of society where we are all free from economic and social constraints. Where we can relate to each other on a level that is determined solely by our feelings for

each other, without the intrusion of money or the market. If the means help determine the end, then it is important that women as well as men desire revolution and are willing to work for it.

A pamphlet *Women's Struggle in Portugal* produced by women in 'Big Flame', uncovered on their visit to Portugal that some groups of so-called revolutionary men in the worker's and neighbourhood councils expected their wives to carry on just as before. When some women in Montijo occupied their factory demanding a pay rise — that would still be giving them £15 less than the national minimum wage of £55 per month, set at that time by government legislation — their husbands, fathers and boyfriends gave them little support. Despite the owner closing the factory, the women continued to make and sell track suits.

"Many husbands, fathers and boyfriends have felt threatened by the women's militancy and have tried to discourage them. Some of the women in the factory have been forced to split up with their husbands rather than stop the struggle at the factory." The government refuses to nationalise it and they can't form a workers co-operative to get financial help because "... as women they have no legal entitlement to sign the official forms ... their husbands or fathers must do it on their behalf ... AND THEY HAVE REFUSED!"

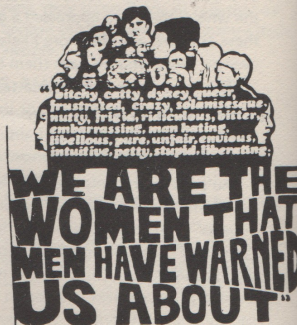
This is the danger in believing that it's all right to wait til after the revolution to break down social conditioning and why the women's movement is so important to us. So what can we do, what about Libertarian propaganda? Although Libertarians don't quite fall into the trap of 'Socialist Worker' of ignoring all aspects of life outside of the 'industrial struggles' (though I sometimes feel 'Anarchist Worker' is moving in that direction) it could be the language we use.

We're so rational, objective, scientific — male-associated words — we use that style to avoid being accused of the dreaded crime of 'utopianism', that smacks of irrational, subjective, emotional — female-associated words. A criticism of the patriarchal domination of the language of the 'left' can be found in *Alternative Socialism* by Keith Paton pp.20-21.

He quotes Marx as an example:

"Just as philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its intellectual weapons in philosophy. And once the lightning of thought has penetrated deeply into this virgin soil of the people, the Germans will emancipate themselves and become men." Keith goes on "... up till now socialism has remained encapsulated within the patriarchal cosmos."

Unfortunately, although Keith makes the effort to avoid the 'lefty' patriarchal jargon trap himself, he instead has evolved a whole new 'hip' intellectual jargon, which at the best is amusing but at worst incomprehensible. SR are aware of the elitism created on the 'left' by the use of jargon, and have consciously tried to guard against it, but the language we use itself has evolved from our society's patriarchal heritage.



*continued on page 17*



# REVIEWS

of his life before a period in mental hospital, memory he had lost as a result of electro-convulsive therapy.

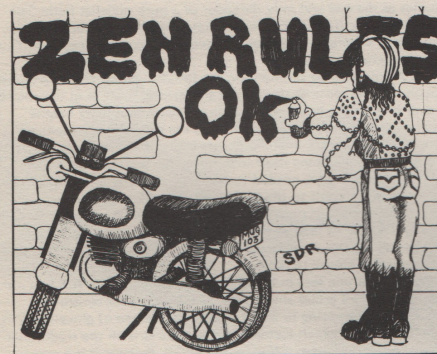
This involves an account of his philosophical investigations in this earlier time, and also an attempt to apply these investigations to the problem of the relation between man and technology, instanced particularly by motorcycles.

This account is necessarily self-conscious, but because it is related in terms of his real quest for understanding this does not seem wrong as it normally would. Starting from a background in philosophy, both Western and Hindu, and a job teaching English, he follows the question 'What is Quality?' — in writing and elsewhere.

His account of his teaching experience provides a caustic analysis of the 'education' system, but soon he leaves this and, by way of Poincaré and others, comes to the pre-Socratic 'sophists'. It has been commented that "all philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato". An interesting version of this occurs in Dave Brown's 'The Illusions of Solidarity', where we are told that 'the revolution all goes back to Aristotle'.

Sohn-Rethel explains this by saying that, although the Classical Greeks did not develop capitalism, they did develop a substantial commodity and money system. Hence the developing capitalist commodity economy took Plato and others as its philosophical spokesmen.

If this is true, we must side with Pirsig and against Brown. For the position developed is an open attack on Platonism. In fact Pirsig uses



for his old self the name 'Phaedrus', Socrates' supposed antagonist in one of Plato's dialogues.

His position is that the despised sophists were correct in asserting that there was a necessary value-judgement prior to any analytical process, and that the later writers were wrong to put analysis (called 'dialectic', but not the same as that of Marx and Hegel) above it.

Pirsig goes on to apply this theory to machines, showing how value plays an important part in our relation to them, and how things go wrong when we neglect them. Hence the title.

One might characterise this theory as 'idealist' and so dismiss it. To do so would be wrong. In the sense of idealism as a philosophical theory the point is rather that he attacks the framework in which idealism and other systems have meaning.

In the social sense it is undoubtedly true. He has no sense of the reality of work. It is all very well to talk of 'quality' in building or repairing motorcycles, but it has little relevance to the man who has to screw on so many nuts per hour if he wants a decent wage. It is significant that 'Phaedrus' means 'wolf' and it is as a 'lone wolf', a creature of the mountains' that Pirsig sees himself.

But motorcycles are not made on the mountain. They are made in factories by people Pirsig would probably see as 'sheep'.

In the earlier period, this neglect of a social dimension was inevitable. He was part of the 'beat generation', or possibly shortly after, when the passivity of the workers meant that all opposition was necessarily personal. The problem is that in his later reflections he has not overcome, or even recognised, this limitation.

PHIL McSHANE

REVIEW: URBAN DEVASTATION: The Planning of Incarceration Solidarity Pamphlet. 25p + post, from 34 Cowley Rd, Oxford.

This pamphlet, briefly but capably, describes and analyses the changes that have taken place in the cities of Britain established by the Victorian industrialists. It shows how the rigid functional hierarchy displayed in Victorian cities, as a result of the complete dominance of the then powerful British capitalists, has given way to something akin to 'organised chaos' under modern bureaucratic capitalism.

The important hierarchy of functions expressed in distinct differences and grades of buildings and roads, allowed people in the old cities a definite sense of locality, and an ability to travel around without difficulty, merely by reading the 'visual message' of the city architecture. This valuable attribute has now been exchanged for more spacy and hygienic architecture which however totally lacks any consistent visual hierarchy.

Anyone can sense this when thrown into confusion, as a newcomer, to one of today's big cities with their maze of ring roads, one way streets, urban motorways, windswept bridges and dangerous underpasses, where a degree in reading signposts or maps is essential to find your way around.

All this, the author contends, is a result, not simply of more private car ownership, but of the conflict of powerful classes and social groups, where none are strong enough to mould the city completely in their own interests.

The corollary of this, is that the solution lies in the majority, the working class, taking control and democratically restructuring the city in their own interests. This solution however, is difficult precisely because the modern city physically (as capitalism socially) separates and divides the different social groupings within the working class, ie. old and young, married and single, black and white, blue and white collar etc. This whole process is well illustrated throughout the pamphlet with photographs and diagrams.

In examining these changes the author comes to reject the views of some past (and present?) libertarians who, reacting against the Victorian city, suggested that a libertarian socialist society would completely disperse the existing urban set-up and base itself on largely rural communes. Whilst I think these views have correctly been rejected as impractical today, it is a pity that the author then holds back from committing himself to the principle of decentralisation.

An examination of the trend of urban development on a national and continental level shows an extreme process of concentration and centralisation paralleling the concentration and centralising of capital in huge private and state monopolies. This trend is proving both socially and ecologically damaging and I can see no good reason for not committing ourselves to a programme of decentralisation in opposition to it.

The exact form and extent of that decentralisation would have to be determined by the socialist majority, but decentralisation in principle would seem to be an essential objective in guiding our day-to-day struggles against capitalism.

The conclusions of the pamphlet are then rather weak, giving no hints as to how the social and physical division of working people in the city might be overcome, nor any positive insights into the great potential for reorganising urban life in a libertarian socialist society. Still the basis for further discussion on these issues is laid and the pamphlet is worth reading for that purpose alone.

Mike Ballard.

—subvertisement—

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It was a happy chance that Robert Bartrop should have sub-titled this book "The Story of the Socialist Party of Great Britain" (SPGB). For story though it might be, history it certainly is not. What it is a highly personal account of the SPGB's 70-odd years in which Bartrop displays his not inconsiderable talent as a writer and his gift for anecdote.

Unfortunately it is also a book badly marred by Bartrop's attempts at self-justification, so that — particularly in the final sections — anecdote takes over almost completely from any pretence to be writing history at all.

In the *Foreword* Bartrop says: "I offer an assurance that every fact as I have stated it." The assurance might be offered but it is absolutely worthless. There are 'facts' in his books which are lies — and which Bartrop knows to be lies.

Talking of the group which broke from the SPGB and which later took part in the formation of Social Revolution, for example, he writes: "In the background, astonishingly, was the influence of the Party's old adversary The Social Science Association . . ." (p.182). Astonishing indeed!

What makes *The Monument* such an odd book is that the bulk of it was written from a critical standpoint after Bartrop (who at one stage went under the name of Coster) had resigned from the SPGB in 1960. Tagged on at the end there are then some concluding chapters in which, along with a one-sided and eccentric account of events in the SPGB during the nineteen-sixties and early seventies, Bartrop

## REVIEWS

explains how he eventually came to rejoin the Party — without ever retracting his earlier highly damaging criticisms!

The critical theme running through the first three-quarters and more of the book is that the SPGB is a political organisation which gradually over the years lost its working class identity. One aspect of this is supposed to have been the replacement of earlier generations of self-educated working men (sic.) in the ranks of the SPGB by those who passed through the mill of 'higher education' in post-war years.

This is not very convincing — for if Bartrop thinks there is any way to get educated at a university other than educating oneself, he should go and try it for himself. His argument mainly hinges, however on the Second World War and the SPGB's response to it and the sections which deal with the War and its dress-rehearsal in Spain were for me the most absorbing part of the whole book.

I well remember the deep sense of shame I felt when, as a member of the SPGB several years ago, I first realised that the Party's opposition to the Second World War had not been all that it was cracked up to be. As Bartrop himself makes clear, "from June 1940 the *[Socialist] Standard* no longer printed anti-war material" (p.107) — the concrete form which the SPGB's opposition to the war took being to ignore it!

Despite a declaration of principles which committed (and still commits) the SPGB to wage class war on the capitalist class and its lackeys and to use revolutionary violence where it proves necessary for the "overthrow of privilege", most members of the Party were by the time of the Second World War out-and-out pacifists. Hauled before conscientious objectors' tribunals, "Almost unfailingly, the members replied that whatever the Principles appeared to say they would not fight, even for socialism." (p.115)

One has to be careful about Bartrop's approach here. Part of what he is saying is that "pacifism was, and remains, almost entirely a middle-class (sic.) attitude." (p.117) This being the case, the SPGB's pacifism was bound to estrange it from (or to be a symptom of) its (already existing estrangement from) the working class. Lurking behind this is the strong implication that there were working class interests at stake in the Second World War and, although he does not mention it, it is a fact that Bartrop himself did his bit for the defence of British capital by joining the RAF.

Yet what was wrong with the SPGB's pacifism was obviously not that the Party refused to fight in support of British capital, nor that it estranged the Party from the working class. Socialists must always be prepared to accept isolation from the rest of the working class as the price to pay for adhering to communist principles when workers are behaving in an anti-socialist manner. What was wrong with the SPGB's

pacifism was that it files in the face of all class-consciousness.

Even cranks like the Jehovah's Witnesses had the courage to go to jail when they stood by their principles and admitted their readiness to fight in a 'holy war' before the conscientious objectors' tribunals. Not so the SPGB. If SPGBers had simply been lying in their teeth and simulating pacifism in order to trick the tribunals, that would have been fine. But, as Bartrop explains, "Many of the members were telling the truth" (p.115) and the SPGB as an organisation "had allowed inroads to be made by pacifism". (p.117)

Having made criticisms like these, we might think it odd that Bartrop should have rejoined the SPGB. But surely it is nowhere near so odd as the fact that the SPGB's head office should itself have been distributing cut-price copies of *The Monument*.

Why should an organisation which has always fiercely insisted that it has no leaders be so eager to distribute a book which describes E.Hardy as "the undisputed king-pin of the Party" (p.99)?

Up to a point it can, of course, be put down to sheer daftness.

There was, after all, no indication that the luminary from the Executive Committee who reviewed *The Monument* in glowing terms in the December 1975 *Socialist Standard* had understood the first thing about what Bartrop had written.

But there is more to it than this. At the centre of the SPGB is a group of tired, old men who have given their lives to the Party. They have given their lives and got back practically nothing in return, so that the chance to now see at least their names and a few of their exploits recorded in print has proved altogether too seductive to let pass by.

Still, for all its shortcomings, the SPGB comes across in *The Monument* as well as in real life as a socialist group. We would be the last people to deny it the credit it deserves. Among its other achievements were to pioneer the analysis of Russia as a state capitalist economy in the English-speaking world and to steadfastly uphold the idea of what socialism really means during the long years of Labour Party and 'Communist' Party ascendancy.

To recognise this, however, is not at all the same thing as concurring with the ridiculous airs and graces which the SPGB assumes as the one and only defender of a pure socialist faith. The SPGB has made its mistakes (and serious mistakes at that) and the socialism it adheres to has been spotted and blemished by all sorts of strange, sectarian accretions.

We should not be too hard on the SPGB even for its sectarianism, though, for the roots of this lie not so much in itself as in the society around it. A small, besieged group in an overwhelmingly hostile environment, it has reacted just like all the other isolated socialist groupings (councilists, anarcho-communists, those in the Bordigist tradition) by enveloping itself in a protective sectarian cocoon.

To say that what is needed today is a non-sectarian socialist organisation different to the SPGB and the others is, of course, to state the obvious, but one does not get rid of sectarianism simply by wishing it away. As long as the conditions which produce it persist (and, above all, this means working class hostility to socialism) sectarianism is bound to remain.

But at least one sees in Social Revolution (and I say this as a non-member of SR) a group alive to the dangers of sectarianism and consciously attempting to avoid its pitfalls, instead of glorifying in the exclusiveness which sectarianism confers as with the traditional socialist organisations typified by the SPGB. Perhaps it is a good thing that people have started to write books about the story of the SPGB because that is where the SPGB belongs — in the history books. The future of socialism must lie with other types of groups.

JOHN CARLTON.

### "ZEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE"

BY ROBERT PIRSIG Corgi 95p

The first thing to be said about this book is that it is not mainly to do with Zen, and, as the author says "It isn't very factual about motorcycles either". The title is a deliberate reference to the famous "Zen in the Art of Archery" by Herrigel.

There are several things which it is about. The first is an account of a journey by the author and his son across part of the USA on a motor-bike. On this level alone it is successful. The description of how it feels to ride, compared to driving a car, the account of the changing scene and weather and the close relation of the rider to his environment, make it clear why many people are so excited by bikes, in a way they would not be if they were used just for getting from A to B. Reviewers much more familiar with bikes than I have been impressed with it on this level.

But the real importance of the book lies in three related themes. There is an account of the author's attempt to come to terms with his own past. As the journey progresses he remembers more and more

*continued on page 19*